THE

MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

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THE RELIGION OF JAMES MAURICE WILSON

By The Editor.

THE recently published autobiography[1] of Dr. J. M. Wilson (Senior Wrangler, Headmaster of Clifton and Archdeacon of Manchester) makes important contributions to the history of English Modernism. Dr. Wilson rightly declined to regard the Modernists as a Church party. He wrote:

> 'I am often asked if I am a Modernist. My reply is to ask my questioner to define a Modernist. I have joined no party. I am a member of no section or union in the Church of England.[2] Modernism is to my mind not a creed or a system, but a statement of the ultimate basis of union among Christians. Romanists believe that the ultimate basis of union is the acceptance of the authority of the Pope; Anglo-Catholics that it is an imaginary Catholic tradition; Evangelicals that it is the Bible as God's word to man; Modernists that it is the Holy Spirit of God working in man. If that view is taken as true, I am a Modernist.'

Like a number of other distinguished men who have offered themselves for Holy Orders in the Church of England, J. M. Wilson was refused. This occurred in 1875, and the bishop who refused him was Dr. Philpott of Worcester. Wilson thus describes the incident:

[1] *James M. Wilson: An Autobiography*, 1836—1931, pub. Sidgwick and Jackson, price 10/6 (1932).

[2] He was until his death a member of the Modern Churchmen's Union, but he did not regard this body as in any degree separatist or partisan.—Ed., *M.C.*

'I told Bishop Philpott that I had definitely abandoned the theory of verbal inspiration of the Bible, and accepted generally the results of Higher Criticism; and also I had told him that I could not accept the general view of miracles, that I rejected those of the Old Testament and discriminated among those in the New Testament. And that I held the Virgin Birth, as a physical statement, to be both unproved and quite irrelevant, and also inconsistent with the perfect humanity of Christ and the significance of the Incarnation. Philpott asked me my views on the nature of Christ's appearances after the Resurrection, and I said I had formed none; the evidence seemed to me insufficient to prove either a material body or any other mode of physical appearance known to us. Philpott, on this confession of faith, or the want of it, would not accept me . . .'

Wilson was not daunted. In 1879 he applied to his friend, Frederick Temple, then Bishop of Exeter, who had had such an inspiring influence on him when he served under him at Rugby. Wilson of course frankly stated his views to Temple, who accepted him and wrote him a letter marked *Private*, afterwards destroyed. Wilson describes its purport:

'In that letter he entirely approved of my views as to Biblical Inspiration, holding that that question, among scholars, was settled, and that ordinary prudence and sympathy would enable me to preach and teach without hurting the faith even of those who held the strictest views on verbal inspiration. I do not clearly remember what he wrote about miracles.

'He drew a very marked distinction between the evidence for the Virgin Birth and that for the Resurrection, and—a point on which he laid even more stress—on the position the doctrine holds in the faith of a Christian and in the Gospel narratives. The former, he pointed out, is easily separable and not indispensable; the latter is inseparable and indispensable. He would accept, therefore, my position as to the Virgin Birth, with the understanding that I did not feel it to be my duty publicly to deny and denounce it.

'On the subject of the Resurrection he took much the same view that I did, namely, that some convincing evidence was then given of the continued spiritual and personal life of Christ, but that it is not paralleled in our present experience, and therefore does not admit of what is called a scientific explanation.'

To-day eminent scientists engaged in psychical research would maintain that there is present-day experience scientifically tested which is parallel with the resurrection experiences of the primitive Christian disciples.

During his Headmastership of Clifton College secularism was being vigorously propagated among working men in Bristol. The success of the secularist attack was largely assisted by the out-of-date character of the Christian defence. As a conse-

quence Wilson felt compelled to give some public lectures in Bristol on the modern Christian view of the Bible. Bishop Ellicott, a very scholarly but very conservative Evangelical, presided as Bishop of the diocese. At the conclusion of the first lecture, Wilson writes:

> 'The Bishop asked me to walk back with him to Clifton, where he was spending the night. He said he had never been so interested and moved by any meeting in his life. "It was an interest that amounted during the whole time to excitement." I replied by asking whether in my address, or in my replies, I had said anything which he thought untrue. He hesitated, naturally, but I pressed the question, going over the same ground again. At last he said: "I do not think you said anything that was untrue to our faith as Christians and Churchmen." I stopped, and thanked him, and then said: "Bishop, I want that in writing." "Oh," he said, "that is quite a different matter: what do you want it for?" I said I wanted it for my protection, and I wanted it at once. He consented to send it in a few days. "No," I said, "I want it by to-morrow morning." "But why? Why by to-morrow morning?" I refused to explain, and at last on his doorstep he promised that he would put in writing what he had said and post it that night in the pillar-box outside his door.
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> 'True enough he did so, and next morning I got his letter. About a week later I got into a railway carriage with him at Fishponds, and he shook his fist at me. "I know now," he said, "why you wanted your answer at once. Look here!" He showed me a lot of letters in a portfolio, which he was answering in the train. "Here are a score of letters from clergy imploring me to denounce you as a heretic . . ." '

The question which prompts itself is, why in this Christian educational campaign should the priest have been leading and not the bishop?

But popular lectures on the Bible were only a part of the larger and more difficult task, which sought to provide a sound Christian education in this scientific age. How to teach public school boys natural religion which should satisfy their intellects, and give them principles of conduct in life, was followed by the problem of how to teach the teachers of men. Of this he wrote:

> 'The study and knowledge of the seen is sure to react on the study of the unseen, and he will entertain these studies in perfect harmony, and he only, in whom the scientific and the religious studies are allowed to grow up, not in antagonism, but fearlessly and freely, side by side, co-operating in the formation of a reverent, active and independent mind, and well-balanced judgment.'

In this connection he had to weigh the value of Biblical Higher Criticism. Most of his contemporary Churchmen felt that it was best left strictly alone by the parochial clergy. In

1888 he proposed it as one of the subjects for the Church Congress at Manchester and introduced it. He summarizes his Congress paper as follows:

'How far ought the clergy to tell the truth about the Bible? Clearly they must tell "the truth and nothing but the truth," but what about "the whole truth"? Here lies the ambiguity of the word "results" of criticism. These "results" are not adapted for use until we have absorbed them and fitted them into our general scheme. As they stand they are like scientific theorems, the applications of which have not yet been discovered. They must be kept in mind, and *not contradicted* even by implication. The Bible cannot be regarded as protected from error; its commands are relative, its revelation is progressive, and we unconsciously but inevitably sit in judgment on it and come to our own conclusions as to what is temporary and what eternal in its teaching. We demand what few of the Reformers dreamed of demanding, a ground and a reason for its authority. We must welcome new learning. No scientific result can be contrary to religion. The mere apprehension that this could be so is itself a deep infidelity. The results of criticism increase the power of the Bible by revealing to us the true origins, stripped of embarrassments, of our religious thought, by showing us the sympathy and insight of the "spiritual giants who have lived closer to God than the men of other nations were able to do,' and finally, by giving us a perspective, they show us Christ Himself standing out "above all his biographers and exponents, above His Church, and above His Word.'

When Vicar of Rochdale and Archdeacon of Manchester, he used to listen with great interest to the preaching of his Church Army captain. This preaching was effective among a certain number of his less educated parishioners, but its influence did not extend beyond them. The Archdeacon writes of this experience:

'He unquestionably had a definite "Gospel" to preach to his people, which I had not. His people generally accepted it, without reflecting seriously about it; and a few, under its influence, became really and permanently reformed characters.

'His "Gospel" was extremely simple, and appeared to be securely founded on texts of Scripture. One such text was: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." He would dwell on the self-sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, and explain it by the text that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." He would also describe in emotional language Christ's sufferings. And then he would draw the moral that, "after realising this, you cannot but love Jesus; He has borne your sins; you must acknowledge Him as your Saviour." Hymns and prayers followed with the same burden. And he would speak of his own experience; all his sins were forgiven, and he had peace.

'I began to ask myself the reason why I could not, and why the parish church congregation could not, feel as he did. Well, of course, the answer was, in brief, that it was incredible that God, Whom we

worshipped as the just and merciful Father of all men, could be so unjust and so merciless as he had pictured Him. The effect on me, however, was that I began to realise that the result of holding a strong religious conviction was *independent of its truth*. This was to me new: it contradicted my prejudices: it was an illuminating revelation.'

This path of reflection and research led him to that view of the Atonement which he expounded in his Hulsean Lectures of 1899. Of them he writes:

'The aim and substance of these lectures may be briefly given. Their aim was nothing new. It was to revive the ancient Greek doctrine, and regard the Incarnation as the At-one-ment, as showing *an identity of nature between God and man in the person of Christ;* and their substance was to bring out the intense reality and force that this conception gives to our religion. I felt unquestionably that this was to be the main contribution that it was in my power to make to present theology. I had entire confidence in the truth of the main point of what I had to say, and of its power; but I felt doubtful whether I had the ability to express it in an acceptable way. The doctrine that I was trying to replace had very deep and ancient roots.'

Having set forth the Atonement in terms of the Incarnation, and having shewn that the Incarnation really pre-supposes the essential oneness of the Divine and human natures, he was led to consider the office of the Church. It seemed to him that the Church's supreme function was to educate the highest faculty in man, 'which we call the spiritual.'

'The creed and the system are only the framework and body formed to contain a life and make it propagate itself.

'This thought defines the nature of the Unity and Catholicity of the Church. Its own universal message is to exhibit to the world the real union of God and man manifested in Christ, to evoke into consciousness the power of spiritual life latent in all, and to train it towards perfection. The Church is thus the herald of the Atonement and the agent of the Kingdom of God.

'Here, then, is the work of the Church as I picture it. Having defined our position and got our machinery, let us use it to moralise all our great activities—our politics, our commerce, our industries, our philosophy, our science, our education, our press. How is it conceivable that such moralisation can be effected by anything short of an idealism which is at once simple and unsurpassedly inspiring? The doctrine of the Incarnation, that is, of the very life of God in man, manifested to our eyes in Christ, is the only philosophy of life which is open to all ranks and intelligible to all the world. It appeals to the common instinct of the simple and the scholar. It is a religion and it is a philosophy. Moreover, it is a law as well as a life. It commands obedience as well as gives confidence. It moralises while it inspires. It does more than moralise: it consecrates.'

We have only dealt here with Dr. Wilson's theological development and his efforts as a religious educationist. Of course

his autobiography contains much else of great interest, but it is his theological significance with which we are concerned. Truly he was a layman's parson: would that our Church authorities had made him a layman's bishop. His son, Sir Arnold Wilson, writes of him:

> 'But, for whatever cause, it may be said that my father failed to convince his generation, or for whatever reason he was not chosen for higher place, it may be confidently accepted as a fact, quite uncoloured by any filial piety, that he never stopped to think out such reasons for himself, nor did he in any way regret, or even consider, his failure. It was in such "seminal thoughts" that he felt his usefulness to reside. He described himself as "neither a trained theologian nor an up-to-date scientist," and admitted that he had no genius for original discovery or thought, only a capacity for crystallising and putting into plain words what the average intelligent layman was thinking. Perhaps his conception of average intelligence was high, but it still remains lamentable that the considered philosophy of such men should outrun the teaching of the Church by so many years.'

His personality reflected the central truth of his theology. Sir Michael Sadler, Master of University College, Oxford, who had known him from his Rugby days, bears striking testimony to it:

> 'There was something in Dr. J. M. Wilson which was like an *X*-ray. It penetrated mind and heart.'
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> 'Only four other men whom I have had the privilege of hearing or of talking to had in them what Dr. Wilson had. They were John Ruskin, John Henry Newman, Thomas Hill Green, and W. E. Gladstone. A ray came from all of them, invisible but penetrating. I can only say that each, at the times when he was fit to be the channel for it, spoke and looked with the power of God. Ruskin was more self-conscious than Wilson: Newman more poignant: Green less articulate, at times almost to the point of being morose. Gladstone came nearest to Wilson. He was more entertaining though less benign, and one felt that he spoke with a wider experience of mundane affairs. But Wilson, like Gladstone, had the divine prophetic afflatus, unlike anything else in the world and unmistakable. Wilson was like a Westmorland fell—speaking.'

EMPHASES OF MODERNISM

THERE are many who declare that Modernism, having won acceptance of scientific and historical thinking within the Church, has fulfilled its task and, like the Life and Liberty Movement when its objective was secured, should cease to exist. But such acceptance is still for the greater part passive : certain items in creed and tradition are no longer credible by the average educated person; the positive implications for the Christian faith of the new scientific and historical truths have not all been stated, let alone accepted, are indeed not yet fully evident. These truths and discoveries of fact are dangerously misunderstood if they be imagined mere negations. They help to constitute the moral and spiritual inspiration of our age whose first and already desperate need is that its own heart should be interpreted to it. The Word has been spoken, and great must be the multitude of preachers. But is not this articulation of the Word nothing less than the preaching of the Gospel, and the task of the whole Church? When we pray, as many of us have prayed these last ten years, that Modernism might rediscover the positive message of Christ, do we not confusedly use 'Modernism' as synonymous with Christianity? Both questions are pertinent. Modernism is Christianity as we understand it, and we might drop a name in many ways unfortunate but for that element in Modernism, non-dogmatic, anti-authoritarian, which insists upon sympathetic open-mindedness towards all expressions of faith, for the truth that may abide in them. By retaining the name 'Modernism' we the more surely retain the sense of our particular imperfections, and hence our tolerance. And here let it be said that could we be convinced that the Gospel of Jesus would advance with the death of Modernism, for us Modernism might die this day. 'I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' And whoever shall preach that gospel, and whatever his name, his party, his ceremonies, his Church-order, he is of us, and we, will he have us, of him. Ultimately, the continuance or non-continuance of Modernism as a movement in the Church may wait upon the event. Only we are sure

for ourselves what the Gospel is, as sure as men ever can or ought to be sure, and until it stand as the single Gospel of the Church we will labour in the name of Modernism, albeit open-mindedly, to persuade others of our truth and publicly claim Modernism to be, if not an exhaustive definition of Christianity, then an emphasis on aspects of Christianity, an emphasis now admitted on all sides, though often but tacitly, to be necessary for the effective presentation of Christian truth.

This outward bearing of Modernism, a reluctance to dogmatize, a readiness to inquire and to experiment, a willingness to examine its own deepest and dearest assumptions, has laid us open to the charge—a popular one—of creedless eclecticism. We are said on the one hand to have no respect for the demarcations of established institutions, and on the other to find spiritual satisfaction as readily in Buddha as in Christ. And so forth. The charge is untrue, and Modernism shares with every vital form of religion, limitation, and conviction of its own finality. But to the intolerant, tolerance must appear as indifferentism. What distinguishes Modernism is no lack of inner certainty, but a reasoned consciousness of its possession of certainty as not unique to it but an element common to all religion, and knowledge that while certainty works miracles of highest religious achievement, often in the name of certainty new truth has been violently resisted. A readiness to receive the Word, a heart of good soil, is of more energizing value than stony certainty that all of the Word is already ours. We stand in good company. We count not yet to have apprehended; we know but in part; and those things which stand trial, which cannot be shaken, we hold for certain.

What then are the aspects of the Christian message which Modernism would emphasize?

We have already stressed tolerance as a characteristic of the Movement. The ground of Modernist tolerance is central to Christianity. We are tolerant, but actively, because we recognize the incompleteness of our knowledge, the imperfection of our reasoning powers, our need for light and guidance, our need for further revelation and fuller understanding of revelation. We are tolerant because we know the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and alone preserves it, because in our most

fundamental assertions we are content to believe that only if they be of God will they not eventually be overthrown. In a word, in the field of knowledge, in the last resort, we are dependent upon God. And so also we are in every other field. Dependence upon God is central to Christianity and the ground not only of tolerance but of all religious activity.

This dependence is first clear to us in the Old Testament. The religious waits upon the Lord, his soul hangs upon God; if God shall turn him, shall heal him, he shall be healed and saved. Can Israel presume to independence when it is the Lord Who brought her up out of Egypt, Who is a flail, a fire, an army on the march, a terrible power? But it is a trustful dependence and a fruitful. The power of God is but the measure of His grace; He teaches Israel as a child to walk; the bonds are those of love; and He does reveal Himself to the reason and conscience of waiting, dependent man. Man waits patiently, but the Lord does incline Himself unto him. Hence it is the religious is dependent, but only upon God. 'Of whom then shall I be afraid?' He fears the Lord and knows no other fear. If the Lord has spoken, who can but hear, and hearing, but obey? Against God's Word what are the apparent gravest exigencies of this world? The religious will defy Ahab: will go naked in the respectable streets for a sign upon Egypt: will preach peace to his distracted king whilst the armies of Nebuchadnezzar are encompassed about Jerusalem. For what are king, priests, statesmen, politicians, in balance against God, but nothingness? 'I do count them but dung.' The New Testament repeats with shriller urgency the message of the Old. The Apocalyptic teaching of the Master is this same trustful, fruitful dependence expressed in the imagery natural to his background. The kingdom comes in power, and of God, not of man; yet its nature is already revealed: we can read it for ourselves in our hearts; and the imminence of its coming is a projection in that time of the uncompromising, absolute, all-or-nothing, expectant character of the God-dependent man.

The Apocalyptic root of Christianity, deep-buried, thick, virile, has flowered again and again in every epoch and climate, and though often strangely yet always profusely. Thwart it, and it twists a devious path up into the air of worship and religious

thought and moral practice, with exotic blossoming. Through the cosmological obsessions of Augustine and Calvin it thrusts its way to bear bitter flower of dependence, the doctrine of predestination and joyless works as desperate evidence of the better destiny. The forthrightness of the prophets is become ruthlessness, the uncompromising morality of Jesus a pitiless condemnation of the many unfortunate, as illogical as harsh. Modernism, in common with its world, lacks a cosmology right or wrong; and one of its sources is this Apocalyptic root. Child of its age, it can make no compromise with creed, institution, or sentiment where truth is at stake. In Modernism's trustful dependence upon God it has understood something of His self-revelation, and would carry its world-heedless, utter conviction of God into every field of life. The Cross, world-defying, world-reclaiming, is our sign.

Modernism might helpfully make the dependence witnessed to in the Old and New Testaments more explicit in its confession. It is implicit in Modernism's deliberating yet unflinching devotion to truth, and I believe it inspired the Christian Socialism of the nineteenth century, of a man like F. D. Maurice. But Modernism has perforce been preoccupied with relatively minor though essential facets of doctrine and belief, and in these latter days Schweitzer's unfortunate substitution of the eschatology-presupposition for the more proper criteria of historical and critical study of the New Testament has made Modernism, with its solid basis of scholarship, suspicious, and slow to accept decisively the profound truth Schweitzer somewhat grotesquely but still invaluably re-stated. This reluctance has led to a certain loss of compelling power in our preaching of the Gospel. Modernism on some sides has shaded off imperceptibly into many-sided Liberalism, and in that camp of politicians who have identified the purpose of the Church with a single function of the State, and developed a Church-craft for the preservation of the institution for its own sake, in that camp the outright religion of dependence is alien. Nemesis is upon the Liberals, in the guise of scientific humanism. Meantime men, such is their character, will turn in religion from nice political calculations, from man-pleasing, to wherever the alternative offers. The alternative many find to-day in the teaching of Barth and his

followers, who establish their position upon a destructive criticism of Liberalism and its careful works.

In Barthianism the Apocalyptic root once more flowers. The root has forced a tortuous way through encrustations of theological thought and moral feeling, the successive Reformation doctrines, both ultimately world-despising, of election and predestination, hardened now by despair of the world induced by humiliating defeat in war. An examination of Barthianism, little though there is of the teaching in translation, reveals its far remove from Modernism, and helps to make clear to us what other important emphases we are committed to make simultaneously with our emphasis on man's final dependence on God.

Let us make no mistake. The strength and appeal of Barth's teaching are no accident of youth and circumstance, but lie in his unclouded recognition of the transcendence of God and man's utter dependence upon Him. But the recognition is unclouded here because unreckoning. Man's reason, his science, man's history, morality, feelings and instincts, which for us make up that complex of life which *is* dependent upon God, have no significance for Barth. Whether man humanly tries to be of Christ or not, as man he is still but dung, if so significant. Contrast with this man's dependence presented in the Old and New Testaments, in its trustfulness and in its fruitfulness for his reason and life. God is to set himself up above the earth, and His glory above the heavens, that He may save His beloved. Man's dependence invokes response which man can understand, reason about, and act upon. He cries to God out of the deep, or pleads he is but a child, but God strengthens him, enlightens him, enables him joyfully to tell forth God in the great congregation. There is little of joy in Barth, which lack alone separates him from profounder religious teachers. And in the New Testament, God is in intimate, fatherly relation with reasoning, instinctive, aspiring man. 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things before ye ask him,' while the discreet scribe has come near to the Kingdom. St. Paul vigorously opposes those who in their worship would conjugate the verb λαλεῖν and so bye-pass reason. 'I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.' But for Barth the single end of man's understanding is to convince it-

self of its own futility. Man turns to God, not in the boldness of innate growing faith, but from the terror of doubt. It is strange that so noble an instrument should have been designed for so ignoble a work, and the position is obviously open to the quiet, graceful criticism Bishop Hooker applied to a similar position in his day. For Barth, man's reason cannot even determine what is the Word of God, can only surrender before it, and it is hard to see what criterion he advances for the Word except that it shall have been printed in the pages of books which we call the Bible. It is not surprising that some of his followers and of those his teaching has influenced, and not always the more ignorant amongst them, have fallen into text-worship, the chance of a random opening of the Bible the direct intervention of the Almighty. Because the reasonable way is particularly hard in these days of Biblical criticism and questioning of premises, we turn back discomfited to the oracles, but with no well-instructed priestess to interpret them for us. With man's reason goes his morality, and with both his history; all three become insignificances. Were sexual laxity, pugnacity and greed hopelessly to alienate God from man, few of us could be in any measure well-pleasing to Him. These thing do, we know, parch our love for Him. But for Dr. Brunner these faults in David need no reconcilement with, affect no modification of, his well-pleasingness to God; nay, rather, David's story only illustrates the arbitrary pleasure of God to select whom He will, we might say in contempt of man's codes and worth. We are prepared for the opinion of this school, that to search after the Jesus of history, to attempt the reconstruction and re-imagining of His life and character, is to founder in the bog of sinful earth after a will-o'-the-wisp. Character and story, these are of no matter. Christ was the stark Word of God intruded upon an alien world. Man may or may not accept that Word, may or may not turn in despair from that futility which is his whole life, but he cannot reason upon the Word, has no competence to consider its claim, and, it must be concluded, is wrong to presume his course to be to model *his* earthy life, his control of his passions and appetites, on that Christ-pattern. With Calvin, Barth denies that the Christian's duty is to surpass worldly morality with such rigour that ethical conduct is bereft of a rational end. Man's

reason, his considerations, and his pitiable life are worthless. But what is this Christ? Plainly not God taking the world as it is upon Himself, not God fleshed in circumstance. This Christ is no incarnation, but a projection of God. We may wonder in passing with what epistemology this school explains man's knowing, in any manner, a Word-Christ so wholly other than himself. We are given little direct statement about this Barthian Christ, but from glimpse to glimpse we weariedly observe it modulating through familiar heresies. As Word of God in no way contingent upon earthly conditions, a projection unrelated to us, this Christ is a logos never hypostatized because never realized as one with the human Jesus of history. Psychologically this Christ is the Word and the flesh, their frontiers by a miracle marching together within a human body, so much as a *communicatio idiomatum* is possible. Cosmologically, when allowance has been made for every acknowledgment by Barthianism of the humanity, this Christ remains Arian, a creature wandered from heaven and with no native resting-place on earth. The richness and depth of orthodox Christology, to such an extent stated in tradition and creed by the Via Negativa, is only appreciated when the shallowness of the heresies is sounded. Modernism emphasizes the Incarnation, its perfection, its completeness, the historic earthly Jesus at once fully God and altogether man. More, Modernism does not concentrate all attention, with Gnostic exclusiveness, on knowledge of the Word; rather it is a religion not only of knowing but also of willing, feeling, active living; as fitly to be described a religion of Incarnation as of Revelation.

The Modernist view of the Incarnation has been decried as negative; it is burningly positive. What popular thought and some influential Church thought have done is to allow as permissible these days the denials of certain tenets in the traditional view involved by the statement of the Modernist view, without acceptance or even recognition of the positive teaching of the new preachers. The result is admittedly a negative religion, shorn of power and appeal, and the rigid traditionalist does rightly to pride himself, by comparison, upon the warmth and vitality of his affirmations. Yet the earlier Modernists were sure they possessed a positive message and stated it clearly enough;

their denials arose by the light of that message, and were published to make straight its path in a traditionally-minded Church. For illustration: the Virgin Birth was not denied in a fit of iconoclastic abandon, but because the fresh positive revelation of the truths of the Incarnation, granted through criticism and historical and scientific thinking, showed the Virgin Birth story not only as, in the highest probability, untrue, but as an active hindrance, no longer the help it undoubtedly had been, towards a devotional understanding of Christ. Positively, in one aspect, Christ was altogether man as we in this century know man to be, and that is a description of Him impossible of application to a figure, whose nature we can only imagine, born of a virgin. A Virgin Birth gives us a lesser Christ; incarnation by such a means is less than perfect on its manward side. The Fathers, and chief among them Athanasius, were at pains to demonstrate that God had taken up into Himself in Christ every attribute, every mental and bodily organ and function of man. They advanced this sound thesis for their soteriological purpose: how could Christ have redeemed man were He not altogether man? We advance the same thesis, in part for the same reason, but chiefly possessed by our idea of God as Father, and of man and the world as His creation which, by virtue of His nature and its, God cannot disdain to take upon Himself. In the light of our modern understanding of man, his origin and generation, an affirmation of the Virgin Birth amounts to a denial of the perfection of God's condescension in Christ and negatives the Gospel. The doctrine is not isolatedly denied by us; it is anathema to us, faithful to the pronouncement of Chalcedon, the formula not necessarily developed, but amended, amplified, and illuminated by our better knowledge of man's physical world and nature, which were Christ's.

But anathematizing is not our task, nor our desire, nor possible to us who must abjure attempting a definitive Christology. In Him the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily: men are sons of God, heirs of God, and if heirs of God then joint-heirs with Christ. Our Christology sparks across those two points. To do more than defend that twin-statement and work out its practical consequences to-day were to justify wholly Barth's right condemnation of mere ratiocination and to stray foolishly beyond

the specifically religious province. Further we cannot go except as the physicists give us a cosmology, the physchologists a coherent account of personality, and other specialists their contributions towards that full understanding of God and His world which may one day be ours.

Our emphasis on the Incarnation interacts with our first emphasis on the apocalyptic element in Christianity and further discovers it to us. We are dependent upon God, a God whose will was and is to incarnate Himself in the sensible world. The transcendent power of God is redeeming love active in the hearts and minds of men. Our dependence is absolute, yet trustful and fruitful. Man with his senses and reason of every day may learn of God, is known of God, since his sense and reason cannot be alien to God who takes man's everyday nature upon Himself. We are able now — and lastly — to emphasize what indeed is involved in the full doctrine of the Incarnation, namely, the ultimate value of reason and the high importance of the rational in religion. If reason be but a channel for God's self-revelation and grace, still the onus is on the irrationalists to prove, against the doctrine of the Incarnation and in face of experience, that it is not also the normal channel.

Modernism is rational but not rationalistic. It is far from Deism. Man does not by his unaided mind reason himself to the throne of God, nor for that matter to any other place where he would be, whether in the realm of religion, of art, or of science. The light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world is the Word of God, which manifests itself in that spontaneity characteristic of thought as of life at large. Christianity is at once rational and apocalyptic.

Modernism's understanding of the relationship between reason and revelation can here only be sketchily adumbrated. There is a distinction to be made between the informing Word of God and the reason of man, thus to mark on the one hand the transcendence of God and His absolute wisdom, and on the other the independence and the autonomy of reason. Barth does not distinguish these two; he separates them by an impassable gulf. In fact, it is hard to understand how the Word of God as conceived by Barth in his extremer moments ever came to be uttered, since utterance is a rational process. Plainly

in experience the clarity of man's expression of God's Word coincides with the soundness of his reasoning, and in history knowledge of God has developed with other knowledge. On reading the record of men's religious experiences it would certainly seem that the Word of God does not abrogate nor ignore reason, but infuses and informs it. 'My heart is inditing of a good matter. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.' It can be said with caution that the reason is a manifestation of God's immanence in man; with caution, for the independence of man's reason must be preserved. Man proceeding reasonably can learn something of God; in truth does so in learning of the world. Only on some view of reason as, like its possessor in his whole being as a creature, sustained of God yet autonomous, can we account for the fact of religious history that in the name of God's revelation much nonsense and some evil have been spoken. To postulate the independence of reason allows for its imperfection and liability to err. Hence religious certainty, for a Modernist, can never be the blind, wild, unreckoning certainty of them under no necessity to distinguish the Word, but must be a thoughtful certainty, and tolerant. Not that reason spins the Word — reason listens and ponders, it does not concoct — nor that the Word seeks always and only utterance that may be rationalized. It is true a religion of mere reason would be a cold and negative thing, were it possible; rather man, if he choose to move solely within the confines of a predetermined logic, reaches but scepticism and despair. Yet revelation of the supra-rational order, the Numinous-experience invoking godly fear and aesthetic response, is an extension of revelation of the rational order, not a reversal of it. The reasons of the heart, though incomprehensible, are not contradictory of those of the mind. And it is the reason, and in particular the moral reason, which recognizes the numinous-experience for what it is, even if it cannot fully explicate such experience. The weakness in presenting the transcendent Word of God, of presenting the apocalyptic element in religion, as altogether other than rational, is the absence then of any criterion by which man may recognize the true supra-rational Word of God in man's actual conditions where many different words purport with equal fervour so to be. The choice of what the Old Testament means by godly fear

rather than jungle-fear as a right response to the awefulness of the Divine is a choice of man's reason already informed in some measure of what is the nature of the Divine. There we have implicit both the independence and the validity of reason in the religious field. Again, reason which has power of itself to learn of God, and to recognize and acknowledge what of the Word is set up above it, has power then to criticize, and in part power to amend, men's expressions of that Word. It is of great practical importance here to observe that wherever what claims to be supra-rational involves statement affecting the field in which reason normally operates, there reason may proceed to examine the statement on reason's own ground and with its own instruments. There is no urgent need to define exactly what is its normal field; reason's right is sufficiently established *de facto*, and what it can examine it may examine. For example, the assertion of the Eucharistic Presence as spiritual is one which reason can only morally test, accept or reject; but any further assertion that the spiritual Presence affects or is contingent upon material conditions is, for that part, open to examination by the appropriate method of science. As Professor MacMurray has lately put the whole matter, 'Science cannot create religion, but it can destroy any religion which does not rest on sound foundations.'

The Word of God and the reason of man are, then, from one angle dependent upon each other, the one for acknowledgment and utterance, the other for inspiration. They interpenetrate and interact. The revelation of a transcendent God lends object, guidance, colour, vision, glory to the reasoning of man; and reason has for task the discovery, the listening to, and the utterance of the Word, upon which indeed it must wait in quietness and humble patience, and, further, the explication, the making available, of the Word for everyday earth. The dependence of the Word upon reason co-operating, for its perfect utterance, is a real one. It is well illustrated by the bold evangelism of St. Peter and St. Paul. For the Pharisee of the Jerusalem Council, as for the writer of portions of St. Matthew's Gospel, the message of Jesus, though urgent and vital, was cribbed and confined within those local and temporal accidents of its imagery which appealed to the exclusive spirit of the Jews.

Within the reasoning minds of the two innovating Apostles the logical implications of a message about God the Father of men grew and flowered in their preaching to the God-fearers and Gentiles.

Revelation and reason are wick and flame, light and sight. The apocalyptic and the rational elements of religion are complementary to each other; the doctrine of the Incarnation is grounded on this truth and shows it forth; and we err disastrously when we make an abstraction of either our sole reference in interpreting the complex life of man. Revelation and reason: man utterly dependent, God perfectly incarnate; what things these words stand for are articulated together in one living, growing organism of which God is the Head, 'from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God.'

To emphasize religious dependence, the Incarnation, and reason as, with tolerance, forming the Quadrilateral of Modernism, is not this rather to emphasize Christianity? Such criticism is gladly welcome, since we are at one with the critic. Only we will name ourselves Modernists because we are imperfect Christians, anxious for the auxiliary truths we realize our brethren possess, marching as they do with party-emblems on their banners. Only there is no doubt that there is need for these emphases, and for them to be made together, in the teaching of the Church to-day. When the far stretch of the way ahead is viewed the history of Modernism is but the story of its birth. But we may be confident, for our own certainty is no less than that Modernism is the eternal truth of the good news of Jesus and the good news about Jesus in the form proper to our time.

M. T. Dunlop.

STAGES IN GOETHE'S RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

THOSE who know the great mountains know well that the far distant view is clearly defined, but that as they are approached so incredible is the amount of detail in the whole *massif*—foothills, gorges, and so on—that even after hours of toilsome climbing one cannot regain that unencumbered view which appeared so simple and majestic. As with Mont Blanc or Monte Rosa, so is it with those great characters which mankind would fain understand in all their complexity. Among such is that of Goethe, whose long life comprised unceasing activities as poet, playwright, administrator, scientist and thinker.

The purpose of this paper is to note briefly some of the steps in Goethe's religious and moral thought. Some have considered and some still consider him as a pagan, yet in his own lifetime the University of Jena declared that he had advanced mightily the true interests of the Church and of evangelical theology.

His mother, eighteen when he was born, was sensible, joyous and affectionate; she preferred to seek the good in people rather than the evil. To little Wolfgang and his sister she was a merry, girlish companion. They were taught to say their prayers, to go to church and to learn the Lutheran catechism. The news of the earthquake of Lisbon (1755) led to the boy's first questionings. He was but six, but he refused to think that the souls that passed away in their sins were lost: church formalism did not satisfy his childish thought. His mother was, however, intimate with a Fräulein Klettenberg of pietistic tendency, and her deeply religious character had much influence on him. He retained always a real affection for her, and a sense of gratitude for her concern in his welfare. At twelve he was confirmed, but in a sterile way that had no relation to his spiritual needs, and from this time he began to be lost to the Christian body.

At sixteen the brilliant, fascinating boy was sent to Leipzig to study law. He stayed there three years, deriving small benefit

from uncongenial lectures. A wild, irregular life, not unnatural to youth entering on freedom, and an unhappy attachment brought about a serious illness with haemorrhage. A relapse while convalescent at home in Frankfort led him back to pietism and he began again to go to the Lord's Supper. As a biographer puts it, he had been scared back by weariness of long pain into reflection and seriousness. Yet about this time he was reading 'An Impartial History of the Church and of Heresies,' which claimed that true Christianity is just with those whom the Church has cast out, a thesis which accorded with his own love of intellectual freedom.

In 1770 he resumed his studies, this time at Strassburg. While here it is recorded how he decisively defended from ridicule a poor student of evangelical belief. Goethe had learned through his many friendships and his mental curiosity to value sincerity and the religious convictions of those who felt not as he did. To this period belongs his passionate love for Frederika Brion—the purest and most touching of his emotional crises—and his decision to leave her. He remembered it always with regret, perhaps remorse. Nine years after he was received with friendliness by her and her parents, and he left them feeling that they were at peace with him. Significant, too, was his friendship with Herder, whose recent essay on the Origin of Language held that God had given to man the powers by which he might develop language; a premonition of that idea of the growth of all things by natural law, afterwards called evolution.

Proceeding to Wetzlar as a qualified advocate, he became intimate with Kestner and his fiancée, a friendship that formed the basis of the *Sorrows of Werther*. Kestner writes of Goethe at this time:

> 'On certain great subjects he will open his mind only to a few, and would fain not disturb others in their tranquil beliefs. Indeed, he hates scepticism and seeks truth and conviction on main points, and even thinks he is convinced as to the weightiest, but so far as I have observed, is not yet so. He does not go to church nor to the sacrament, and prays seldom, for, he says, "I am not hypocrite enough for that." Sometimes he is tranquil as to certain subjects, sometimes anything but. He reveres the Christian religion, but not in the form in which our theologians present it. He trusts there is a future life, a better state. He strives after truth, yet holds the feeling after truth higher than the demonstration.'

This is not quite a picture of spiritual tranquillity. To Lavater

Goethe speaks of his 'zealous unbelief.' To Pfenniger, who tried to convince him of the truth of revelation, he replies:

> 'all which seems opposition between us is only a strife of words which comes of my perceiving things in other combinations. . . . To me the word of man becomes like the word of God. . . . The stupendous All can no more be conceived by you than by me.'

He was then coming under the influence of the 'God-intoxicated' Spinoza. In the 'Ethics' he found a sedative; they seemed to unveil a clear, broad view over the material and moral world. He was riveted to them by the boundless disinterestedness which shone forth in every sentence. His mind was filled by that wonderful sentence, 'He who truly loves God must not require God to love him in return.' The teaching that God himself cannot change His laws, that His creatures cannot deviate from the laws of their being, and that the primary virtue is to maintain oneself in one's being according to those laws, that the distinctions of good from bad are arbitrary ordinances, confirmed Goethe in his feeling that the nature working in him so mightily must be developed freely. One moonlit midnight he and his friend Jacobi promised each to each to use their utmost strength to accomplish the best things of which God and Nature had made them capable.

This was the Jacobi for whose judgment of *Werther* Goethe was most anxious, and was relieved to learn that, having read it thrice, he approved it thoroughly. Lavater also praised the book, a judgment the opposite of Lessing's. Be that as it may, the effect of this book on its age was astounding. Perhaps he had expressed the world weariness which afterwards infected England through the melancholy of Byron. As he wrote soon after of his *Stella*, an inferior work, so he might have written of *Werther*, 'I will present them (people urged by passion); they shall know themselves as I have known them, and shall become, if not more restful, yet in their unrest stronger.'

Until he went to Weimar in 1775 Goethe had no thought of spending himself in practical life. His attachment to the young Duke, eight years younger than himself, whose follies he restrained as best he could, suggesting his duties as a prince, his honest desire to mediate between him and the young Duchess, the confidence of the Dowager in his right-mindedness, the new experience of men, his scrupulous performance of his manifold

duties as Privy Councillor—all these were a welcome corrective to his wayward impulsiveness (*Weite und Geschwindigkeit*). 'Goethe,' so wrote Merck, 'is all important and all directing, and everyone is content with him because he serves many and injures none. Who can resist the disinterestedness of the man?' Goethe himself was assured that his Destiny had led him to these new activities: 'the pressure of business is beautiful for the soul; when the burden is gone, the soul's play is freer, and life is found a joyous thing.' And to Lavater: 'the labour laid upon me . . . becomes daily dearer to me; in its discharge I wish to act like the greatest men, I wish in nothing to act like the merely greater. This desire—to make the pyramid of my being (the base being given to me) to soar as high as can be—outweighs all else and permits hardly a moment's forgetting.'

We venture to suggest that having found a kind of 'katharsis' or cleansing in the writing of *Werther* and *Stella*, a foothold in the philosophy of Spinoza, and a tonic in his duties in the government of Weimar—all these before he was forty—Goethe had arrived at a definite stage in his moral and spiritual development. If this be so, we may pass over his stay in Italy and his friendship with Schiller, each momentous in other directions. We must mention, however, that shortly after coming home to Weimar and breaking off, in a way we cannot defend, his long friendship with Frau von Stein, he had entered into a 'union of conscience' with Christine Vulpius, of humble birth. Eighteen years after, from gratitude he married her, and she lived another ten years. There is no question that he was attached to her sincerely and to the end. But soon after the marriage, when he was fifty-eight, he had become impassioned for a girl of eighteen. The result of his struggle for self-mastery was the much-disputed *Wahlverwandtschaften* (Elective Affinities), the painful plot of which stresses directly and by implication the sanctity of marriage. Long after he wrote of it to Zelter, 'the text is the Sixth Commandment.' To Eckerman he said it was the only work of any length in which he was conscious of having striven to set forth an idea. And again, 'in it, as in a burial urn, I have deposited with deep emotion many a sad experience.' It was written in deliberate seclusion, and here again, in this less-known story, he worked out another 'katharsis.'

When in 1831 Goethe finished the Second Part of *Faust*, it was very different from the original or *Ur-Faust* which he had written nearly sixty years before. This latter (1774-5), based on the mediaeval legend, was a tragedy of unsurpassed intensity, the bartering of his soul by Faust and his seduction of Gretchen. But it is an objective drama of individual characters: so far as it is subjective it expresses Goethe's own youthful emotions and doubts. 'I too had wandered in all fields of knowledge, and had early come to see the vanity of them all. I had tried all kinds of ways of life, and had always returned more dissatisfied and troubled.' Thirty years later, when (1808) the First Part of *Faust* was completed, he had long realised the deeper issues involved in Faust's turning from his ideal aims to sensual satisfaction. The First Part is still a tragedy, but it shows forth the eternal problem of good and evil. Heaven and Hell contend for the soul of Faust. Guilt is now not a mere succumbing to temptation, but a ceasing to strive upwards; and in this striving is the possibility of salvation. In the Prologue in Heaven, God says to Mephisto:

> 'Wenn er mir jetzt nur verworren dient,
> So werd' ich ihn bald in die Klarheit führen.' [1]

Twenty years after this (1831) there appeared the Second Part—a series of symbolical scenes—in which there is the further and final step towards peace and salvation, that of working for humanity. Goethe explained it to Eckermann: 'In Faust himself there is an activity that becomes constantly higher and purer to the end, and from above eternal love comes to his aid. We can attain blessedness not through our own strength alone, but with the help of divine grace.'

This was his testament, completed a few months before his death. And to it we must add his doctrine of *Entsagung*, sometimes, as by Carlyle, rendered misleadingly, 'renunciation'; 'self-restriction' is rather what Goethe meant. From his youth he knew himself to be emotionally inconstant, but from Spinoza he learned the duty of developing one's individuality. As his wisdom ripened, he saw that individuality must be developed in harmony with the interests of the social body. Selfish impulses

[1] 'Yes: for he serves in a perplexing scene
That oft misleads him. Still his will is right;
Soon comes the time to lead him into light.'

must give way to altruistic endeavour. '*Stirb und werde*,' die to all that is non-essential, so that 'thou mayest (become) develop.' This is the meaning of the phrase 'the pyramid of his existence,' quoted contemptuously by R. H. Hutton. Goethe was an optimist in his religious thought and no ascetic. Of painting he said, 'the greatest art is to limit and isolate oneself.' The specialist in every art and science must eliminate the unessential and concentrate. So it is with the art of life, and with the endeavour after spiritual perfection.

In another sense, too, there must be limitation; man was not born to solve the problems of the world—for Goethe knew there was no finality in human thought—but to discover where they lie and to keep within the limits of what is comprehensible:

> 'Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um;
> Dem Tüchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm.'[2]

Was Goethe, then, a pagan, as is sometimes said, or a Christian? It is charged against him that he was non-moral, that is, impartial to good and evil, without moral humility and without personal faith and trust. Yet the man who wrote *Faust* and the 'Song of the Blind Harper' had surely known scalding remorse. We venture to give here a version of this lyric from *Wilhelm Meister*:

> 'Who never ate his bread with tears
> Nor through the slowly moving hours
> Sat bowed in agonizing fears,
> He knows ye not, he knows ye not, ye heavenly powers.
>
> Ye yield us to the bonds of sin
> From the first moment of our birth,
> Then leave to torment and remorse;
> All crimes and guilt revenge themselves in full on earth.
>
> With lurid flame the horizon glows
> From the first gleam of morning's sun;
> Then crashes o'er our guilty heads
> The ruined beauteous world, the beauteous world undone, undone.'

Schiller said of him he was more admirable as a man than anyone else he knew; he was thoroughly in earnest for the right and the good, hence all hypocrites and phrase-makers were uneasy in his presence. Hutton concedes that in his own life he was higher than his works, fuller in sympathy and generous self-

[2] 'Firm let him stand and look around him here;
To men of worth this world is never mute.'

denials than he ever makes his heroes to be. As to his alleged lack of moral reverence, we may refer to his doctrine of the Three Reverences — reverence for that which is above us, that which is around us, and that which is beneath us; this latter 'we name the Christian; it is a last step which mankind is fitted and destined to attain.' He believed in a future existence, 'for nature cannot dispense with the entelechy or living principle; but we are not all in like manner immortal, and he who would manifest himself in future as a great entelechy must be one now.' A few days before his last illness he was speaking freely of his beliefs. He bowed before Jesus as the divine manifestation of the highest principle of morality; the Reformation had made us capable of turning back to the fountain-head and of comprehending Christianity in its purity; the human mind would never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity as it shines forth in the Gospels. When the pure doctrine and love of Christ were understood in their true nature and had become a vital principle, we should not attach special importance to a degree more or less in the outward forms of religion; we should advance gradually from a Christianity of words and faith to a Christianity of feeling and action.

Goethe believed, further, in a continuous and progressive revelation of the Divine, even in pre-Christian days; among, for instance, the Chinese, the Indians, the Persians, the Greeks, and now, no less, in the great minds of the present world. Were we to suppose that God had withdrawn into silence, and that man was to see how he could get on without Him? Granting that divine influence was still felt in religious and moral matters, was progress in art and science nothing but the product of human power? Could the works of a Raphael, a Shakespeare, a Mozart be created by human power and human will alone? Were these and others of high genius not divinely endowed? Surely God had not retired to rest after the six days of creation, but was constantly as active as on the first. It would have been for Him a poor occupation to create this world and to keep it rolling through space for eternity had He not had the plan of founding upon this material basis a nursery for a world of spirits. Thus He is now active in higher natures, in order to attract the lower ones.

Goethe, then, was no pagan; nor was he a Christian in the orthodox sense of his own age or ours. But his nature was deeply serious and intellectually truthful, and a long life of inward conflict and human service led him to the supreme wisdom which accepted the teaching of Christ as the highest that had yet been revealed. Much can be said reasonably, and much will yet be said, against Goethe; but as he said of Schlegel, who had criticized Euripides, if a modern man must pick out faults in so great an ancient, he ought only to do it upon his knees.

H. Alexander Clay.

THE FUTURE OF ASCENSION DAY

By the Rev. A. C. Bouquet, D.D., Vicar of All Saints, Cambridge (Hulsean Lecturer, 1925).

So far as we can judge, men began to keep Ascension Day with any sort of unanimity some three hundred years after the conclusion of the earthly life of Christ. The process by which they came to this observance is an obscure one, and, like many other matters connected with the development of our Church calendar, its origin must be left to conjecture. It is not difficult to suppose that in allotting particular days of the year to the commemoration of the more important events in the life of our Lord, one day should have been devoted to the honour of an event which, however abnormal, seemed clearly recorded in the narrative of Scripture, attested by several of the epistles, and apparently foretold in more than one psalm. It is probable however that it was not at first regarded as an anniversary of equal importance with the great feasts of Easter and Pentecost, since Gregory of Nyassa calls it ἐπισωζομένη, which may mean 'an extra festival,' and Etheria tells us in her famous (probably late fourth century) diary that it was not kept in Jerusalem as a distinct season, but observed in conjunction with Pentecost: this may have been a local custom, but it was observed also in the same manner about the year 350 in the neighbourhood of Edessa.

Belief in the Ascension as an event was at any rate universal both in East and West, alike in the Creed of Second-century

Rome and in that of Jerusalem. 'The Church,' writes Irenaeus before 180, 'though scattered throughout the whole world to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples her faith in one Christ Jesus and his assumption in the flesh into the heavens.' 'The rule of faith,' says Tertullian, 'teaches us to believe that Jesus Christ was carried up into heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father.' In the neighbourhood of at least Antioch and Constantinople a curious custom seems to have developed of calling one of the suburban villages Elae, and using it at Ascension-tide as a place of ritual pilgrimage, thus reproducing the episode when the Lord led forth his disciples, and in their sight blessed them and ascended up into the heavenly places. (It is possible, one supposes, that Elaes, in an olive-growing country, may have been a common place-name.)

Much has happened since then. The festival, after assuming great splendour, has suffered almost total eclipse. In the reformed churches it is well-nigh ignored. Rome and the East still maintain it as a holy day of obligation. The Anglican Church has allotted it a special collect and lections, but few of her members regard it, save where Anglo-Catholicism and that creation which in a large measure we owe to Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, 'good churchmanship,' have led to a revival in the more faithful observance of the calendar. This decline is partly due to critical difficulties connected with the narrative, partly to changed conceptions (not wholly un-Pauline) concerning the mode of the Lord's existence, after his earthly ministry had come to an end, partly to changes in our beliefs about the geography of the universe.

I am not merely pleading for leniency towards the survival of an ancient custom. The times are too serious for that: the present generation is called upon to face far greater questions.

1. First, it is called upon to consider seriously the possibility (or rather the desirability) of preserving any observance of one day above another, in the religious sense. We Christians, as the Bishop of Truro admits, took over from our Jewish predecessors the fashion of a seven-day cycle, accompanied by a sequence of sacred days, though in so doing we acted in harmony with natural

rather than with prophetic religion. Amos and Isaiah clearly did not think that the service of God greatly depended upon the ritual of new moons and sabbaths, and it is curious how churchly Christians slur over the plain-spoken utterances of St. Paul, when he says in his letter to his Galatian disciples :

> ' after that ye have known God, or rather been known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days and months and times and years. I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain ' :

and again in the famous passage in the letter to the Romans, in which he contrasts the Christian who observes every day alike with the Christian who observes one day above another, and indicates that though in his opinion both find justification in the sight of God, his personal preference is for the former class.

Puritanism made a clean sweep of all anniversaries but the sabbath. It is recorded that during the Commonwealth the Puritan mayor of the city of Canterbury forbade the observance of what he described as ' the heathen festival of Christmas.' The public in this country now wishes to go further and is prepared to do away even with the seven-day cycle, and this not necessarily from motives of secularism. I happen as a parish priest to know more about this than most people, and I cannot doubt the evidence of my senses.

Under such conditions a day like Ascension Day, with a limited and difficult appeal, stands small chance of survival, except perhaps as a date by which to fix fairs, markets, public holidays, examinations, and so forth. We need to remember that the Quakers have a clearly defined attitude towards sacred days which is increasingly at any rate the sub-conscious attitude of many Christians, and which is well expressed in the words of Whittier's famous poem on the Feast of the Nativity :

> The outward symbols disappear
> From him whose inward sight is clear ;
> And small must be the choice of days
> To him who fills them all with praise.
>
> Keep while you need it, brothers mine,
> With honest zeal your Christmas sign ;
> But judge not him who every morn
> Feels in his heart the Lord Christ born.

We see, however, at the same time the introduction of new

sacred days, Empire Day, Armistice Day, and the great international Labour Festival on the first of May. The French and Russian Revolutionary attempts to alter the calendar have been due, not to the desire for the abolition of cycles or anniversaries, but to hostility to Christianity. Their promoters have shown themselves quite ready to foster the observance of new days of obligation, such as the birthdays of Marx, Lenin, or Auguste Comte, and the anniversaries of the foundation of their Republics, and to permit a cycle which runs, for instance, in multiples of ten.

The inference to be drawn is that mankind still needs to keep anniversaries, but that their meaning must be plain if they are to meet with any general observance. Ascension Day under present conditions is not likely to be even as moderately well kept as Christmas Day. It is a festival for those persons whom the Parisian calls '*très-pratiquants*.'

2. This brings us to our second serious issue. Can we discern any value or significance in the events of Ascension Day which has been caught up into the main stream of Christian belief and which deserves to be preserved on account of its essential truth, whether by an occasional holy day or not matters relatively little? To answer this question we must first of all make up our minds as to the status of the occurrence described as the Ascension. We must note that St. Paul makes no express reference to it in his list of post-resurrection appearances. He assumes that it has taken place, but he seems to identify it with the Lord's conquest of death, and so associates it with His change of condition following upon His burial, and treats it as involved in whatever is meant by His resurrection. If we are to look for a reference to it in I *Corinthians* xv, we must identify it either with the appearance to 'more than five hundred brethren at once' or with the appearance 'to all the apostles.' But whether we do so or not, we are bound in the circumstances to treat the tale of what happened on the Mount of Olives as the tale of a post-resurrection appearance and withdrawal, and that, to the mind of St. Paul, places it in the same category as his vision on the road to Damascus, and to us also must mean that it is in the same category as the vision of St. Stephen at the time of his martyrdom.

Bishop Gore writes: 'To the disciples the Ascension was no doubt an event at a particular moment, but the lesson which it taught was a lesson allied to that taught by the earlier appearances, though a distinct lesson.' He questions whether it is not true that our Lord during the so-called great forty days was all the time in 'the heavenlies,' and whether it is possible truthfully to assert that there was any change of state in our Lord's *own* consciousness before and after this event.

Such reserve and reticence differ widely from the dogmatism of the traditional Christian teaching, which accepts the naïve Scripture narrations of *Luke* and *Acts* at their face value. It is difficult not to believe that the Bishop is right.

Even if the disciples actually experienced this happening upon the Mount of Olives, we can hardly deny that as a matter of actual fact the *account* of it has obviously been attracted into a form resembling that of the accounts of the apotheosis of more than one famous person in antiquity, and must be judged accordingly. The story does not commit us to a theory of the progressive removal of a semi-etherealized Jesus from a condition in which He was wholly or at any rate rarely visible, since a good many of His appearances even as recorded in the New Testament fall chronologically after Ascension Day, and the extraneous appearances to the saints are numerous. Nor again can the event signify, as it did no doubt to the compiler of our canonical book of *Acts* and to St. Paul, the removal of the Lord from the plane of earth to the seventh heaven, since that involves the correctness of the cosmogony favoured by Aristotle, and this, though in the first four centuries of the Christian era felt tenable alike by heretics and by orthodox, is now no longer acceptable to any educated person, except perhaps to a few cranky theosophists.

The event, therefore, upon the Mount of Olives belongs wholly to the realm of vision, and to evaluate it for to-day we must needs consider the meaning of the symbolism which occurred in it. Perhaps I may be allowed to draw attention to the accredited Roman Catholic view with regard to the visions of Christians in general, as contained in the treatise of Father Poulain on the graces of interior prayer. Briefly stated, this view is that all visions of Christians are to be subjected to rigid tests,

which will inevitably eliminate four-fifths of them as pious illusions. They must be tested by enquiries into the sanity and honesty of the recipients, whose motives, character and subsequent behaviour must be carefully scrutinized. Literary criticism must do its work upon the records of these visions, and the alleged events must be shown, if they are to be believed as having taken place, to possess coherence with the well-attested facts of history, science and sane religious experience. Further, it is allowed that the symbolism of visions may vary from case to case, and may even be contradictory; while persons seen in visions may assume bodily forms and postures, and move about and wear clothing in a way in which we know very well that in reality they do not. The Divine purpose, says Father Poulain, in granting us such visions is not to satisfy our curiosity, or to give us exact topographical information, but to teach us spiritual truths for the welfare of our souls.

There seems no reason why we should deny ourselves the liberty of thought which is officially granted to members of the Roman Church, and which is so evidently reasonable. We can no longer, since the days of Francis Galton, regard the imagery of visions as the sign of a disordered intellect. His once famous researches into human faculty have passed into the ancient history of the psychological science. We know now that many persons, more perhaps among some races than others, possess the faculty of visualizing their mental impressions to a degree which, if it were not well-attested, would be held incredible. Galton himself mentions the Bush-men and Eskimo among uncivilized peoples, and the French among civilized. I think that if he had been pressed he would certainly have agreed to have included among them also the Hebrews. The faculty, however, occurs no doubt in individuals almost everywhere. It is recorded of a Hindu convert to Christianity in South India that he asserted that he had seen Jesus Christ, when on enquiry it was found that his statement was of the nature of a Galtonic visualization, and that what he really meant was that the living spirit of Christ had communicated with his inner consciousness so vividly that to his mind's eye the Lord had been really visible. A spiritual and mental commerce had led to a physical phenomenon. It is true that most of the cases investigated by Galton

refer to memory images, whether eidetic or not, and not to constructional and imaginative mental images; but the latter are equally well attested, and occur in the lives of perfectly sane individuals, where they must be carefully distinguished from hallucinations produced by drugs, toxic poisons, or organic disease. On this point I will venture to quote the considered opinion of one who has considered the subject deeply, and of whose Christian faith there can be no question (Mr. Stuart Moon):

> 'If we would cease once for all to regard visions and voices as objective, and be content to see in them forms of symbolic expression, ways in which the subconscious activity of the spiritual self reaches the surface-mind, many of the disharmonies noticeable in visionary experience, which have teased the devout, and delighted the agnostic, would fade away. Visionary experience is — or at least may be — the outward sign of a real experience. It is a picture which the mind constructs, it is true, from raw materials already at its disposal: as the artist constructs his picture with canvas and paint. But, as the artist's paint and canvas picture is the fruit, not merely of contact between brush and canvas, but also of a more vital contact between his creative genius and visible beauty or truth; so too we may see in vision, where the subject is a mystic, the fruit of a more mysterious contact between the visionary and a transcendental beauty or truth. Such a vision, that is to say, is the "accident" which represents and enshrines a "substance" unseen: the paint and canvas picture, which tries to show the surface consciousness that ineffable sight, that ecstatic perception of good or evil — for neither extreme has the monopoly — to which the deeper, more real soul has attained.
>
> 'Visions and voices, then, may stand in the same relation to the mystic as pictures, poems, and musical compositions stand to the great painter, poet, musician. They are the artistic expressions and creative results (*a*) of thought, (*b*) of intuition, (*c*) of direct perception. All would be ready to acknowledge how conventional and imperfect of necessity are those transcripts of perceived Goodness, Truth and Beauty which we owe to artistic genius: how unequal in their relation to reality. But this is not to say that they are valueless or absurd.'

What then, it may be said, did the Ascension Day vision convey to the disciples? What did it authenticate to them? And of what value is it to us, who live at a much later age, yet still, as we believe, in the earlier centuries of the Christian movement? Church tradition seems to have generally regarded the symbolism of the vision as indicating the exaltation of the victorious Jesus to the kingship of the world. That at any rate is indicated in the language of the Ascensiontide hymns. Is there any reason for disregarding this tradition? I cannot see that there is; and if to the Palestinian Christians of the first century

such visual imagery was permitted, and was the vehicle by which they consciously expressed their belief in the world-wide kingship of their Master, it seems to me unseemly to treat it with disrespect, even though it may make but little appeal to the men and women of our own age, or of future ages. It is the fact that matters, not the imagery by which it is expressed or communicated. At the same time I must confess that permanently to associate the now widely-accepted sovereignty of Christ with the imagery of a Palestinian vision in such a way as to press the actual mechanics of what happened, and to appear to regard the event as having taken place in the world of matter, seems to me thoroughly inadvisable. The vision upon the Mount of Olives authenticated a spiritual fact to the disciples, just as much as St. Stephen's vision heartened and supported him at the point of death. Nevertheless these experiences remain incommunicable, and if we are by an anniversary to touch the imagination of the multitudes alive to-day, and to educate them in a belief which we hold to be true and wholesome, we must do so by encouraging them to keep an anniversary or festival which expresses that belief in plain and acceptable terms, such as the recently inaugurated Roman Catholic Festival of Christ the King.

Meanwhile we have a plain duty, in the face of a world which is increasingly afflicted with materialism and all its attendant evils and with the standardization of life at the mundane level, to show forth the spectacle of a steadfast unworldliness, to live 'as seeing Him who is invisible,' raising ourselves in heart and mind to that high and yet not remote plane of being in which the earthly valuations of life and its activities are not transcended or reversed. And there we must 'continually dwell.' We must insist that it is the unseen realities which are eternal, and that the visible world is only the series of patterns woven by the invisible world of mind in its ceaseless self-expression. It is for this reason that such a day as Ascension Day, with its message of a reigning though invisible Jesus, is still of value even to those who pass it by. The world will be redeemed and transformed and will achieve its true destiny by the unflinching constancy and strivings of the disappointed idealists who, in spite of rebuffs and loneliness, never cease to strive.

THE JERUSALEM BISHOPRIC

THE Jerusalem Bishopric is unique amongst Anglican episcopates in that it represents the whole Anglican Communion at the Mother City of Christendom, its primary concern being with the Eastern Churches, especially the Orthodox Church which is the Church of the Holy Land. It was founded jointly by England and Prussia in 1841, each having alternate right of appointment; the Prussian nominee had to be in Anglican Orders and to be approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Convention of December 9th, 1841, which was signed by Archbishop Howley and the Prussian Minister in London, stated :—'He (the Bishop) will establish and maintain, as far as in him lies, relations of Christian charity with other Churches represented at Jerusalem, and in particular with the Orthodox Greek Church, taking special care to convince them that the Church of England does not wish to disturb, or divide, or interfere with them, but that she is ready, in the spirit of Christian love, to render them such offices of friendship as they may be willing to receive.' The Archbishop's Letter Commendatory to the Patriarchs (November 23rd, 1841), said, 'We have charged the Bishop not to intermeddle in any way with the jurisdiction of the Prelates or other ecclesiastical dignitaries in the Churches of the East, but to shew these due reverence and honour.' When the Bishopric was revived in 1887, the Statement signed by the two Archbishops and the Bishop of London, defined the Bishop's position more precisely :—'The English Bishop has no territorial jurisdiction and would be improperly called Bishop of Jerusalem.' (Statement of February 18th, 1887.) The Bishop therefore is always called 'Bishop in Jerusalem,' the Orthodox Patriarch being the Bishop of Jerusalem, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the Cathedral of the Holy City.

Bishop Alexander, of Jewish birth, was appointed by England (1841-45); Prussia nominated Bishop Gobat, formerly a Swiss Lutheran missionary (1846-79); Bishop Barclay (English) died within two years of his consecration (1879-81). The Bishopric then lapsed for five years, Prussia declining to

appoint in her turn because (as the ex-Kaiser said to Bishop Blyth, when visiting St. George's Church, Jerusalem), 'Prussia did not get her fair share out of the arrangement; our man had to be consecrated in your Orders!' The earnest request of the Patriarch Nicodemus of Jerusalem greatly influenced Archbishop Benson in reviving the Bishopric in 1887, and reconstituting it as an English Bishopric. His Beatitude wrote: 'We are moved by fervent desire to see nearer intercourse between the two Churches, so that every spiritual assault and activity against them of the Evil One . . . may be more easily and effectively baffled and rendered fruitless. We consider it necessary that a Bishop of the Church of England should be placed in this Holy City, . . . assuring you that we shall receive him with much affection and shall, with all our power, assist and support him in all his efforts and transactions.' Archbishop Benson's choice fell upon Archdeacon Blyth, of Rangoon, who had just retired after 21 year's service in India and Burma. In 1887 the Bishopric was about seven times as large as Great Britain and Ireland; it included 'Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, Cyprus, and the region of the Red Sea.' The Sudan Campaign of 1898 added that vast territory to it, but in 1908, Archdeacon Gwynne was made suffragan Bishop of Khartoum and, since 1914, he has held Egypt and Sudan together as an independent Bishopric.

In 1887, there was not a stick or a stone that the Bishop could call his own. The London Jews' Society (now Church Missions to Jews) had a church inside the City walls; it was consecrated, but the Bishop had no rights there and could only preach or celebrate by invitation of the missionary superintendent in charge; there was no early Celebration until the new Bishop made himself responsible for one every Sunday morning at eight. The Church Missionary Society had a small church outside the walls, for the use of their Arab congregation; it was unconsecrated and the services were held in Arabic. Realizing that there could be no permanence under Turkish rule for work housed in hired quarters, the Bishop set to work immediately to collect funds for building the various churches, schools, and hospitals with which Anglican pilgrims to Palestine are familiar —St. George's church, boys' school, library, bishop's house,

clergy house and hostel, girls' school, nursing home and free dispensary at Jerusalem: St. Luke's church, hospital, boys' and girls' schools, and mission house at Haifa: chaplaincy at Beyrout with mission schools among the Druses in the Lebanon: St. Mary's church, mission house (now Bishop's House) and schools in Cairo: permanent and season chaplaincies in Egypt.

The brotherly support promised by the Patriarch Nicodemus (1883-90) was continued by his successors, the saintly and learned Gerasimos (1891-97) and the wise Damianos (1897-1931); but during the five years' interregnum relations between the two Churches were severely strained. The Church of England had been represented in Palestine by missionary societies, answerable only to their home committees; congregations of native 'converts' had been drawn from the ranks of the Orthodox Church, which was deeply incensed at these depredations. Resentment and mistrust on one side, and harshness and misunderstanding on the other, had raised high barriers everywhere, which had to be broken down before any advance could be made. While 'no formal step had ever been taken on either side to repudiate or excommunicate the other . . . communion had been suspended between us . . . But when did the Anglican Church take any formal action against the Orthodox Churches?' (Bishop Blyth, 1887.) This spirit of approach met with ready response from the Orthodox Church. And here let us note how entirely this Church has grasped the points peculiar to our own. It was Archbishop Laud, I think, who described the Church of England as both Catholic and Protestant. The Orthodox Church fully acknowledges her Catholic aspect, her Sacraments, her Orders, her Apostolic descent; and it was an Orthodox Patriarch who said to Bishop Blyth, 'But after all, *we* were the first Protestants, for we protested against the errors and the claims of Rome and we have never ceased to protest against those.' The Church which knew for centuries the bitterness of subjection to non-Christian rulers, exactly appreciates the office and dignity of the State Church and its relation to the Sovereign.

Many instances of mutual friendship and intercommunion (unofficial but not secret) between the two Churches in Palestine have increased understanding, and so have helped to prepare the way for the present grand move forward by East and West.

Many of these instances are unknown, many can never be told, but this does not lessen their significance in the promotion of unity. A few may be recalled here. The Patriarch granted the use of a chapel in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for English clergy to celebrate the Holy Communion; the necessary fittings were supplied by English Churchmen, the Patriarch always giving the bread and wine; the offerings were devoted to the education of poor Orthodox Arab boys in St. George's School. The Patriarch commissioned Bishop Blyth's chaplain to convey a confidential communication to the Coptic Patriarch in Cairo. In 1907, a whole district in the Lebanon, comprising nearly 6,000 persons, wished to join our Church. Enquiry revealed the fact that foreign political intrigue was being used to foment genuine grievances. During the six weeks of discussion between these men and the Orthodox authorities, Bishop Blyth (with the hearty approval of the latter) allowed the Syrians the use of the English chapel at Beyrout in which they held their own services. Four hundred Orthodox Bethlehemites petitioned the Bishop to receive them into the English Church; this he refused to do, of course, but having heard their troubles, he offered to see the Patriarch on their behalf. After full discussion between His Beatitude and the Bethlehemites, the threatened breach was averted, and the Patriarch warmly thanked the Bishop for his good offices. The heads of all the Eastern Churches at Jerusalem have always attended special and official services in St. George's Church; the Patriarch Damianos himself was present at its consecration in 1898, and on many other occasions subsequently. The friendship between His Beatitude and Bishop Blyth (1887-1914), was continued with the Bishop's successor, Dr. MacInnes (1914-31).

The recently announced nomination to the Jerusalem Bishopric of the Rev. G. F. Graham Brown, Principal of Wycliffe Hall, is full of promise. He has lived in Jerusalem and what is known of his sojourn there inspires confidence. Whilst maintaining the most cordial and loyal relationship with the Jerusalem Patriarchate, he will recognize that the usefulness in Jerusalem of the great Christian communion which he represents is to be realized in being true to herself, her character and her methods.

Although our Bishopric is younger than all except the Latin, our Church has a distinctive place in Jerusalem. The Orthodox Church especially needs and counts on her help, but all the Eastern Churches equally respect and trust her, while they still hold aloof from Rome, deploring the mingling of spiritual and temporal claims in her. The Orthodox Church in Palestine now can meet and make advances which were impossible under Turkish suzerainty. Our Church is the bridge between East and West, and her opportunities to serve both East and West and to draw them together, through her Bishopric in Jerusalem, are increased year by year.

E. M. E. Blyth.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE IMPATIENCE OF TWO PARSONS.*

It was said by John Ruskin that the greatest thing that a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it has seen in a plain way. The writers of *Tell John* have indeed seen something. They have seen—more, there has been burnt deep into their hearts—that primary truth without which all religion is vain—that man is nothing and God is all. If we venture to suggest that they have been blinded by the heavenly vision, we hasten to add that we do not think the price too high for any individual to pay, though he must necessarily confuse as much as he enlightens those whom he tells what he has seen—unless indeed they have seen it too and a gracious God has added to his former mercies to them this—that the scales wherewith his glory smote them at length have fallen from their eyes. It is a very wonderful thing to find religion for the first time : to be rapt from earth to heaven and be able to cry, in the words of the hymn, ' None of self and all of Thee.' But it is a more wonderful thing, with one's heart in heaven and these same words its deepest utterance still, to have returned to earth again, to see it now as heaven's outer court, and to recognise that though man of himself is nothing yet he has God-like powers, which should be used to the full to promote the glory of the God who gave them. The writers of this book have ascended into heaven, but earth is for them a home no longer, and all man's powers they regard as ' very far from holy.' Therefore we rejoice to feel as we read their pages that though we have the root of the matter here, its finest flower is still to come. *Tell John* seems to us to mark an important stage in the writers' own religious development.

Accordingly, we do not feel that there is finality in Mr. Allen's description of the five successive stages of man's spiritual growth. They are, he says, formal orthodoxy first, secondly individualism and the religion of humanism, followed by a sense of futility breeding penitence, into which breaks at last God's Self-revelation, the final stage being one of reforming activity.

**Tell John.* By Geoffrey Allen and Roy McKay. (Published by Alexander Maclehose and Co. 5/- net.)

Mr. Allen appears to identify his second stage with Modernism, to which he thus does a grievous wrong. Modernism, as such, is concerned with religious theory. It perceives that the essence of a revelation is that it should be understandable, and that until it is understood there has not been a revelation in any real sense. Inevitably, therefore, it exalts man and all his powers. But in doing so, no sane Modernist claims that man's powers are not derived from God, or attributes to man the self-sufficiency which our authors rightly condemn. We should like to persuade them that they have failed, so far, to distinguish between the language of devotion and the language of dogma. The two are not divorced, but there is a diversity of function. Philosophical theology must be rational, but only in immaturity can it be mistaken for religion's self. As a substitute for religion it must of course be rejected, but unfortunately in so rejecting it our authors have not distinguished clearly what they have done, for they have given us a devotional book largely in the language of religious theory instead of in the language of religious devotion: the dualism between God and the world and between God and man which exists for feeling, they have attempted to translate into thought. We read, for example, that when we have surrendered our first foolish pride,

> 'we shall begin by being radically in earnest with the doctrine of the Fall; this does not mean the unearnest theory of a Fall in days far past in Adam or ape, but the fully earnest fact that the world here and now with all men in it is estranged from God and cannot of itself find the way back to God. . . We shall recognise that to think to flatter Jesus and ourselves by equating the perfection of His humanity with divinity is not to re-interpret orthodoxy, still less to believe in orthodoxy, but to deny orthodoxy: this supposed new Christology is nothing but the old heresy of denying the two natures, made worse by the fact that in its modern form the divine nature is absorbed into the human, not the human into the divine.'

At the same time—whether because the two authors do not always see eye to eye, or whether, as we think more likely, they are aware of some weaknesses in their position and are on the alert to disarm criticism—the book contains passages like the following, which indicate a different point of view:

> 'It is, however, none the less true that there come moments when the world of nature seems to tell of the glory of God. . . God speaks again within the heart of man through conscience and reason.'

The presence of so many cross-currents and antitheses in the book makes it very hard to review. And frequently, moreover, we find passages which defy our understanding. Thus:

> 'In its deepest meaning the Resurrection is neither historic fact nor religious experience. . . Like every other word of God, the Resurrection is either self-authenticating or it is not the word of God.'

One at least of the authors evidently owes a great deal to the late Baron von Hügel. We ourselves find in the Baron's writings all that Mr. Allen and Mr. McKay have to tell us of man's 'creatureliness'—but how much more and how much less. For example, von Hügel says: 'I have had for years increasingly a double sense of the large spacious range of our ethical, etc., capacities, and of the necessity and value of an ideal and indefinite exercise for them.' The present authors quote these words, but only in order to emphasise what follows them—that such human activities are not God—not in order to give them also their own full value. We look in vain in *Tell John* for this 'more' of von Hügel's. And would that we could find

his 'less' of invective against the religiously immature. The judgments of our authors on the religion of others grieve us by their sweepingness: but perhaps there is no inconsistency between this and their condemnations *passim* of pride as the sin of sins. One of the marks of conversion is a sense of special choice by God and of election to proclaim a downright message: it is hard to believe that others know what to us appears so new and revolutionary: but a wider knowledge of souls and of their experiences and strivings makes one more humble, so that messages of love and encouragement usually succeed to the convert's first cries of denunciation. We regret profoundly Chapter II of this book, entitled 'The Corn is Withered.' No clergyman with pastoral experience and achievement could be guilty of such expressions as 'the God-industry' applied to Church services and to Church membership, or of such diatribes against the insincerity of Church worshippers as in 'lips have moved, the ear drums have vibrated at the sound, that is all: no word has been spoken, no word has been heard: nothing of meaning has happened . . . the machinery runs smoothly, the goods are being delivered.' Mr. McKay, whose contributions appear to us easy to distinguish from those of Mr. Allen, simply does not know what 'catching of the breath or quickening of the pulse' can and often do accompany the recital or hearing of quite traditional phrases in Church services. For the rest, it is unavailing to rail at those whose feelings of repentance do not match the words they have to repeat. Church services must be regarded from the point of view of training in worship as well as from the point of view of complete sincerity in worship. In these days, moreover, no one comes to Church to be merely formal.

The authors bewail that faith in God has died from the world, and urge us very rightly not to substitute intellectual assent to correct opinions for the response of the whole personality to God in perfect trust. But faith is something more than passive trusting: it is a fervent aspiration of the whole personality, and it has content. Unless this is fully admitted there is no escape from the intellectual obscurantism which the writers see that their essay may be used to encourage.

A chapter entitled 'At Midnight a Cry' emphasises that watching and waiting is man's part. How true this is. But does it not involve the admission that there is something of value that can be done by man himself?

We are next told that 'The Deaf Hear' and 'The Blind See' (if we may use the titles of the next two chapters) when some word of God comes to them with self-authenticating power; and that this is the only test that can be applied. We ourselves submit that a more valid test is the life in which the divine revelation is expressed. 'Ye shall know them by their fruits.' And by this test we are suspicious of a divine 'Revelation' which compels men to live in 'no man's land, between the lines where the war is waged between the Kingdom of God and the republic of men.' We refuse to believe 'that human society is organised in revolt against God'; that 'we belong to a rebel camp, and all we can do is to rebel in turn against rebellion.' If human society in general is organised against God at all, it is so organised only in ignorance and indifference.

Chapters on 'The Dead are Raised' and on 'Good Tidings' describe from the depths of experience the surrender of the soul to God, its agonies and shrinkings, and final emergence into other-worldliness and power. Students of the mystics will think that they recognise very clearly here the first, or purgative, stage of the Mystic Way. Only time can show whether the authors themselves will concede that they have been passing through a typical conversion in all essentials. We do not think that it has been

reserved for them, or even for Karl Barth, to discover a new spiritual road. Certainly it is to the great Christian mystics that we ourselves should turn to learn the primary religious lesson now presented to us in such tortured thought-forms. If we conclude by saying sincerely of our authors that we would that all men were as they, sincerity compels us to add also, 'save these bonds.'

R. D. RICHARDSON.

A COMMENTARY FOR THE MAN OF ORDINARY CAPACITY.*

There are some people who make it their boast that they have read their Bible through from beginning to end. They are not always those distinguished for their understanding of any of it. Many choir-boys begin the feat (as a help to sitting through long sermons) but their race does not often survive the difficult going reached in Leviticus! And yet, despite the obvious difference between reading and understanding, the traditional sanctity attached to Bible reading has often fostered an unintelligent interpretation of the message of Scripture.

To-day, no leader intentionally encourages such an attitude. 'Read carefully and with the aid of an up-to-date Commentary,' is the advice given from pulpit and rostrum. Incidentally, the advice is not specially modern. Tillotson once concluded a talk on Understanding the Bible with the words, 'When we say the Scriptures are plain to all capacities in all things necessary, we mean that any man of ordinary capacity, by his own diligence and care, in conjunction with the helps and advantages which God hath appointed, and in the due use of them, may attain to the knowledge of everything necessary to his salvation.' But where can the 'ordinary man' turn for these 'helps and advantages'? Nearly all of the Commentaries issued in recent years, while containing first-class scholarship and a wealth of learning, have just failed to be of use to the 'man of ordinary capacity.' They have either been couched in difficult language or so concerned with textual and other details of which the ordinary man knows little and thinks less, that they have failed to be of practical use to him.

However, in *The Teachers' Commentary* this real need has at last been met—and met very efficiently. We believe that it is one of the best guides for 'the man of ordinary capacity' which has yet been produced. It is a handy volume, bound, incidentally, in a cloth which is 'fast to sun, and washable.' It contains a full and interesting series of articles offering a general introduction to an understanding view of the Scriptures; and these are written by competent scholars in a style and manner which are easily followed. (There are a few exceptions to this; *e.g.*, Dr. Basil Yeaxlee's otherwise excellent article on 'Why teach the Bible'? is marred by the occasional use of long and involved sentences.) Its commentary is fresh and interesting and while it is thorough, it does not enter into relatively unimportant minutiae. It also preserves a good sense of proportion, so that while *e.g.* Leviticus claims only half a page, Jonah receives 3 pages, ending in a useful paragraph on the 'difference between a "really truly" story and a "once upon a time" narrative.'

As the title implies, the book has been designed to give the teacher every practical aid that modern knowledge and experience have introduced. 'Unquestionably,' says Dr. Yeaxlee, 'more day-school teachers shrink from teaching "Scripture" because they have had little or no training in it than

**The Teachers' Commentary.* General Editor, the Rev. Hugh Martin, M.A. pp. 430+xiii. (S.C.M. Price 8/6.)

desire exemption on the grounds of religious disbelief.' To teach John arithmetic, it is necessary for one to know some arithmetic and also to know John ! Hence the 41 contributors to this volume are all experienced teachers, able to bring their experience and their knowledge of child-psychology to bear upon the problems of the class. The trained teacher knows what to tell and what to omit; where to lay the emphasis and when to leave the story just to convey its own lesson. So in this Commentary, the passages brought specially to light are selected according to the chief approved Syllabuses of Religous Instruction, while the subject matter is so grouped as to make it easy, *e.g.*, for a teacher to frame a lesson on the character and work of Abraham, or a course of lessons on the Acts. And all of this is considerably aided by some good illustrations of the customs and life of the people of Palestine. (There is a discrepancy, however, between the exegesis on p. 282 and the previous illustration on p. 17.)

With regard to the exegesis, the tone is definitely liberal. There is a good discussion of ' Miracles ' which, if it fails to satisfy all of our doubts, at least suggests a line of thought which the teacher will do well to ponder over. We quote :

> ' For teaching purposes the emphasis will be on God's love, and on faith. When questions of credibility are raised, the teacher must be prepared sometimes to confess ignorance. But in every case it should be found possible to fix attention upon the original teller of the story . . . and to point out that what made the story worth telling was the fact that it represented the preacher's own experience of the power of Jesus. That will lead naturally to the discussion of what it may mean in our own experience ' (p. 12).

Hence, the story of the Wise Men, *e.g.*, is treated so as to stress the truths which it illustrates, without either insisting on its historicity or falling into the popular error of justifying astrology. The incident concerning the Coin in the Mouth of the Fish is made to divulge its underlying meaning and so is explained in a way which seems to us both natural and reasonable.

We confess, however, to some disappointment over the discussion of the Resurrection narratives. Let us admit their obvious difficulties. But it is just these that many Teachers come up against : and they will look here for a definite lead—and they will look in vain. The Commentary on each Gospel refers to the others, but the Teacher who turns hopefully from one to another will probably end by thinking that on this matter, the writers had nothing important to say.

We have no hesitation in recommending this as a first-class companion to the Bible. If Sunday School teachers, as well as others, can be encouraged to read it, and if they can be given a little guidance how to use it in the preparation of their lessons, it should make for real progress in our Sunday School work.

J.P.H.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF ENGLAND*

We are told that Dr. Lingard, when he was reproved by the redoubtable Bishop Milner, the author of *The End of Controversy*, for conceding too much to the Protestants in his *History of England*, said, ' Your Eminence must remember that I am writing history, not controversy.' Mr. Belloc manages to combine history and controversy. We do not complain of this.

* *A History of England.* Volume IV. By Hilaire Belloc. (Methuen & Co., Ltd. 1931. 15/-.)

The truth is that any historian who aspires to be more than a mere compiler of annals must have in the background of his mind some philosophy of history. Especially is this true of the historian who treats of one of the great decisive turning points in human affairs, like the Reformation or the French Revolution. Inevitably, if he is to rise to the height of the argument, there must be present to him some notion, implicit or explicit, of its inner significance, and of its place in the development of man's destiny here on earth.

It is to the credit of Mr. Belloc that he makes no pretence of impartiality. There are too many historians, from Tacitus downwards, who begin with promises of impartiality that their subsequent performance signally fails to redeem. He writes as a sincere and convinced Roman Catholic. He is quite definitely Roman as well as Catholic; indeed some of us may feel that he is more Roman than Catholic, taking that much abused term in its etymological sense. He boldly proclaims that the Faith is Europe and Europe is the Faith. And Europe, to Mr. Belloc, means the Roman Empire, which to his mind has never really passed away; the Latin cult and the Latin culture are to him one and indivisible.

So robust a partisan has no difficulty in making concessions that to a weaker mind might seem damaging, or, at any rate, inopportune.

> 'The separation of England from the unity of Christendom was the separation of an ancient province of the Roman Empire, stuff of its stuff. The roots of England went back to the origins of our European training, and her story is part of that one great story wherein the Gauls and Italy, the Valley of the Rhine, and the Middle Danube and Spain all hold communion.'

The spirit of Catholicism and the spirit of Protestantism are opposed:—

> 'To the one spirit the older England belonged, . . . to the other belongs all modern England. The history, the literature, the law, the humour and therefore the very soul of England has been, since the process was completed, Protestant; and so remains.'

In the not very remote past which some of us remember it was considered that to style a line of conduct or a religious system 'un-English' was a sufficient and crushing condemnation. The average Englishman would have felt himself more insulted by being called 'un-English' than 'un-Christian.' Things are changing, but there are probably not a few Englishmen left who will not abandon without a pang the traditions of three not inglorious centuries, and it may be that some Roman Catholics will feel that Mr. Belloc is a little too sweeping.

It is this aloofness from, not to say hostility to, English Nationalism that makes his account of the great days of Elizabeth so different from the current version in which most of us were brought up. Nothing is here of the glories of the Elizabethan drama; 'Poor little Spenser' is just mentioned—as having his house burnt down in Ireland. Drake, Raleigh, Hawkins are pirates, slave-traders, bandits. It will do Englishmen no harm to be shown the obverse side of the medal, to see something of the seamy side of the Elizabethan Age, and it had a very seamy side. It is just as well to have our inordinate pride mortified a little. Doubtless, Drake and Hawkins were, from the Spanish point of view, ruffianly free-booters. But one is tempted to protest that Spanish dominion in America was but a new thing, that Cortez and Pizarro were, from the point of view of the Aztecs and the Incas, robbers and torturers. Granted that there was an ugly streak of cruelty in the Elizabethans, inherited from the Middle Ages, which

showed itself in their treatment of 'missionary priests' and suspected conspirators, have the apologists for the Inquisition much right to complain of persecution? 'Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes?'

With Mr. Belloc's account of the breach with Rome and the destruction of the monasteries there is, allowing for his point of view, little fault to be found. He admits quite frankly the corrupt state of the Church, the need for reform in head and members which all thoughtful and religious men at the beginning of the sixteenth century acknowledged. Most people will sympathise with his indignation at the sacrifice to private greed of the glorious abbeys, whose stately ruins seem to utter a mute protest against the sacrilegious spoliator. But on this matter there is one thing to be said. Of the vast estates throughout Europe bequeathed by the piety of the Middle Ages to the Church little now remains in any country. It is not only in England, not only in Protestant countries, that the Church has been despoiled. The vast wealth in land and tithes of the Church in France made shipwreck in the Revolution. During the nineteenth century monasteries were suppressed and the revenues of sees annexed by Catholic governments, and the rising tide of secularism in Spain and elsewhere is even now completing the work. It is probably true that the Church of England retains to-day a larger proportion of the wealth bequeathed for spiritual uses during the Ages of Faith than the Church in any other European country.

We do not suppose that the fact affords any satisfaction to Mr. Belloc, unless he contemplates the ultimate restoration of the property unjustly usurped by the schismatic Church of England to its rightful owner, the Catholic Church. Mr. Belloc's attitude towards the Church of England is, perhaps, all things considered, not unfair. On the question of the validity of Anglican Orders he says that Anglican and Roman Catholic controversialists are at cross-purposes:—

> 'Of Apostolic succession in the external, or what the opponents of the Anglican Church would call the mechanical, sense true history can make no question. The more zealous Catholic opponents of that Church were led into extravagant errors in this matter, of which the most absurd was the famous "Nag's Head" legend, which pretended that the new hierarchy descended from a burlesque played in an inn. It descends as a fact from regular ordination at Lambeth: performed on Dec. 17th, 1559. That was an ordination, however, not according to the old Catholic Ordinal, rather on the model of Geneva. The one party, the Catholic, maintains that the Sacrament of Holy Orders depends upon the intention of making sacrificing priests, and that this intention was absent in the affair of 1559, where the Ordinal used was a new one. The opposing party either maintain that the intention to make sacrificing priests is not of the essence of the rite, to which also they deny the title of a Sacrament (and with this the vast bulk of Anglicans from that day to the end of the nineteenth century would agree with them), or (as a minority of Anglicans maintain) that the intention of making sacrificing priests was present, though not specifically mentioned. The discussion being of such a nature, it is clear that no end to it can be reached, because the postulates on either side are incompatible one with another.'

Yet he does not deny the presence in the Anglican Communion of what some might call a Catholic element:—

> 'Though the newly-established Church was and is Protestant, there is one modification of that truth which it is of the very first importance

to remember. For if we neglect it the whole story of the succeeding century becomes unintelligible. The affirmations of Laud, the activities of Ken, the fierce quarrels of the Puritans, the hesitation of so many till James II's fall. To misinterpret it is, further, to make nothing of the Oxford Movement and of what is called Anglo-Catholicism in our own day. Within the English Church were many who not only regretted but thought to continue what all their fathers and their own youth had known. The framework of the Catholic structure—its terms at least—remained.'

It is illogical, but it is also extremely natural, human nature being what it is, that the question of the rights and wrongs of the English Reformation should have got mixed up with the not altogether edifying subject of the private lives of the principal actors in it, and especially of those of Elizabeth of England and of Mary Queen of Scots. Philosophically, there is no reason why a belief in justification by faith should go with a belief in the perpetual virginity of Queen Elizabeth, or why a belief in Transubstantiation should involve a conviction that the Casket letters were a forgery. But tales of love and crime have a popularity too often denied to theological treatises; detective stories appeal to a wider public than works on divinity. There is a story told of a Victorian lady who seldom visited the theatre, but was persuaded to go and see Shakespeare's 'Anthony and Cleopatra.' 'How different,' she exclaimed, 'from the home life of our own dear Queen!' In the sixteenth century royal courts were not schools of virtue. According to Swinburne, the Court of France where Mary was brought up was to the Court of Charles II as the Court of Charles II was to that of Queen Victoria. Yet if, judged by the standards of Victorian propriety, both Elizabeth and Mary Stuart leave much to be desired, there are few characters in history which exercise such a fascination over posterity. To the romantic temperament Mary makes, perhaps, the stronger appeal. Swinburne protests against the detractors who defend her memory on the ground that she was a dastard and a dupe, acclaims her splendid courage and brilliant intelligence, and declares that a braver, if not a rarer, spirit never did steer humanity. It is probable that he would have treated with equal scorn Mr. Belloc's picture of Elizabeth as a nervous invalid, the tool and victim of Cecil. We prefer Mr. Lytton Strachey's treatment of the strange mystery that surrounds the private life of Elizabeth to that of Mr. Belloc. He should not have quoted the scandalous gossip of the foul-minded Countess of Shrewsbury without telling us that she also indulged in gross slanders against Mary. Considering how open to every eye was the life of royal personages in those days, and how constantly Elizabeth was exposed to hostile observation, it is remarkable how little definite evidence there is against her. Whatever may have been her egoisms, her foibles, her vanities, her tergiversations, Elizabeth leaves on us, as on her contemporaries, an impression of greatness. As long as Spenser and Shakespeare are read, as long as men love England, 'Queen Elizabeth of famous memory, we need not be ashamed to call her so,' as Cromwell said, will live in the hearts of Englishmen.

The volume shows occasional signs of haste and carelessness: for example, Calvin was not a 'priest' (unless that term be understood as short for 'presbyter'), and William Cecil was seventy-eight, not seventy-one, when he died. But these are small things. We are grateful to Mr. Belloc for an entertaining and provocative book; perhaps it hardly shows him at his best, but even his second-best is very good.

GAMALIEL MILNER.

ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY EXPLAINED.*

In less than 120 pages Dr. Foakes-Jackson has produced a history of the Church of England. It is a fine example of significant selection and lucid summary. It should be read in conjunction with Canon E. W. Watson's monograph, *The Church of England,* published in the Home University Library.

The period before the Reformation is covered in some fifteen pages. The author, we are glad to note, discards unhesitatingly the legend that pre-Reformation England was not loyal to the Papacy. Englishmen accepted the Papacy during these centuries as an integral part of the Christian religion, although they resisted unjust Papal exactions and administrative abuses. It is one thing to refuse to obey your father, but it is quite another thing to deny that he is your father and possesses parental authority. The English people never, until the reign of Henry VIII, denied the Papal supremacy over the *Ecclesia Anglicana.* Magna Carta sought to protect the English Church from regal, not from Papal, tyranny.

Another figment of which Dr. Foakes-Jackson disposes is 'the Ages of Faith.' He writes: 'There is a popular belief that once there were what are termed Ages of Faith when the entire Christian world held the same creed. But the historian is never able to discover them.'

In ten pages our author deals with Modernism and its causes. His treatment is clear and just. He writes:—

> 'Those who are endeavouring to reconcile science to the historic faith have been called Modernists. Their opponents are the two extreme parties, who agree to declaring the attempt to be hopeless. "Continue to hold the old faith," is the cry of the Traditionalist. "Never mind these modern notions; keep to the old ones and you will be safe." But how can this be done? How can we let our children be taught the science of to-day in the day school, and that of ancient Babylonia on Sunday? How is it possible to keep our minds so isolated as never to hear what is done in the field of Biblical criticism? Can the Church stand aside as an uninterested spectator when capital seeks to enslave labour, and labour cries out for the destruction of capital? We must recognize facts: and this is Modernism.'

Dr. Foakes-Jackson has wise things to say on the problem of reunion. For him Christian reunion means more than the re-uniting of our existing separated Churches. He writes:—

> 'Greatly as we may desire to see the reunion of the Churches we must realize that the problem of the future is wider than this. There are at the present time numbers of men and women who are in a greater or less degree Christian in spirit, and who accept Jesus Christ as their Master, but who do not belong to any organized body of Christian believers. We hear on every side that there is a widespread unwillingness to accept dogmatic or even institutional Christianity. It is often said that the rising generation desires to have faith without a creed, and brotherhood without a Church. What is to be done with such people as these? Is it possible to imagine a great reunited Church of the future whose bounds will be wide enough to include not only those who are at present members of all existing bodies, but also those who to-day are members of none, though remaining Christian in outlook and spirit?'

**The Church in England.* By Dr. F. J. Foakes-Jackson. (Pub. Cambridge University Press: 1931. Price 2/6.)

We can recommend heartily this little book to those who wish to understand that extremely interesting but mixed magnitude, the Church of England.

H.D.A.M.

BABYLONIAN AND SEMITIC MYTHOLOGY.

Mr. S. H. Langdon's work on Semitic mythology is an imposing volume,* and in view of the vastness of the field and the richness of the material, it could hardly have been made smaller. One cannot help feeling that Semitic mythology does not describe very accurately the contents. But if a volume on this subject is entrusted to one writer, what can he do? He will naturally be led to concentrate upon that part of the field which he knows best. This is what the author of this book does. And if it is true, as he maintains that it is, that Babylonian-Assyrian influence was paramount in Semitic religion, he will have felt justified in doing so. We are told indeed that the Babylonian-Assyrian religion of Mesopotamia 'from prehistoric times moulded the mythological and theological concepts of all Semitic races of the Northern and Western areas, in Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, and Trans-Jordania' (p. 15). This is surely a bold statement. Too bold, when we reflect how much we have still to discover about the beginnings of this religion and others, and how uncertain often is the interpretation of the Babylonian-Assyrian material already discovered. Mr. Langdon himself admits that an Assyriologist is liable to make mistakes in interpretation (p. 196), and this admission rebounds to his honour. The fact is of course that he has great faith in and enthusiasm for his own subject. The account of his book on the jacket informs us that 'it is pan-Babylonian in tendency, showing that all the Semitic peoples except the Arabians were influenced by Babylonia and eventually by the Sumerians, whose earliest records begin about 4000 B.C.' The exception is interesting, and we should like to know very much more about Arabian religion than Mr. Langdon tells us.

The author's courage is admirable. In his Introduction he writes as follows:

> 'After long study of the Semitic and Sumerian sources I have become convinced that totemism and demonology have nothing to do with the origins of Sumerian or Semitic religions. The former cannot be proved at all; the latter is a secondary aspect of them. I may fail to carry conviction in concluding that, both in Sumerian and Semitic religions, monotheism preceded polytheism and belief in good and evil spirits. The evidence and reasons for this conclusion, so contrary to accepted and current views, have been set down with care and with the perception of adverse criticism. It is, I trust, the conclusion of knowledge and not of audacious preconception' (p. xviii).

It is hardly likely to be due to audacious preconception. But the furrow which Mr. Langdon is ploughing here is not as lonely as he seems to think. He can claim support from the discoveries made in other fields by the Diffusionist School of anthropology in England, and by the school represented by Professor W. Schmidt, Editor of *Anthropos*, abroad. He is perhaps the first Assyriologist to have put forward such views.

The name of the author is a guarantee that the book is very much up-to-date. Indeed, original sources are sometimes used and translated for the first time, and several references are made to the discovery of a flood-deposit

**The Mythology of All Races. Vol. V: Semitic.* By Stephen Herbert Langdon, M.A., Archaeological Institute of America. pp. xx, 454. (Humphrey Milford: 1931. 52/6 net.)

in Mesopotamia. We are told in this connection that the Flood of Sumerian, Babylonian, and Hebrew legend must refer to a flood of which traces have been found at Kish and Ur almost at water level—a flood not later than 3500 B.C. and probably earlier. Another rather bold inference from the discovery of a local flood! But the author's references to the Old Testament are always interesting and note-worthy. There are interesting references to the New Testament as well. In fact the book provides students of Semitic religion with a vast store of valuable information. It should be placed in every library which aims at being adequately equipped.

MAURICE A. CANNEY.

TWO RECENT BARTHIAN BOOKS *

Two recent Barthian volumes, *The Significance of Karl Barth* and *The Word and the World,* deserve attention from those for whom such literature has an attraction. Mr. F. R. Barry has described Herr Brunner, the author of the second volume mentioned above, as a 'menace,' and the writer of the first is one who has fallen a convinced victim to the forceful demands of the movement of which Dr. Brunner is so distinguished a representative. Mr. McConnachie is a Presbyterian Minister at Dundee, and a previous attitude of criticism to Barth's position has now been transformed, by further study and personal contact with Barth himself, into one of real appreciation. Whether that is justified or not must be decided by those who read this book for themselves, and it deserves that attention. It suffers, as all the literature of this movement seems to suffer, from a certain obscurity of theological expression which must be in marked contrast to their ability in the pulpit to sway the minds of their listeners. In both these books we are given the main lines of the Barthian negative position as against those tendencies in the modern world which make the Christian Gospel seem a stumbling-block. One does not have to be a Barthian to agree with a good deal of their criticism—their dislike of the individualistic self-sufficiency of the modern man, which has taken away from him any hope of outside salvation and then proved that he is completely unable to save himself; their craving for a passionate religious sincerity, which captures the inmost heart of a man and sets him before the eternal God in all his weakness and futility; their vigorous attack on the last remaining strongholds of the nineteenth century Liberalism, with its Christ as 'an amiable Sunday School teacher'—Mr. Barry's phrase—and its identification of modern culture with the Christian Faith, and their insistence on Christianity as a religion of history in which God has been and is revealed. But must we then throw away the enormously valuable doctrine of the immanence of God in his world of beauty and art and human goodness? Have all the really constructive achievements of modern civilization no worth at all, if one admits that Christianity is more than these? Is the relation of God to the world one of judgment alone, and not also of creation and preservation and purpose? And if we are enjoined to beware of the broad and breezy way that leadeth to destruction, does it follow that we must therefore dance on a tight-rope over that abyss all our lives? The Barthians remind one a little of John the Baptist. They cry, and with reason, for repentance, but their constructive proposals are not as good as their denunciations. Their theology is beginning to reveal itself as one that is unacceptable—if only because it is incomprehensible, and the books

* *The Significance of Karl Barth.* By J. McConnachie, M.A. (Hodder and Stoughton. 7/6 net.)
The Word and the World. By E. Brunner. (S.C.M. 4/- net.)

mentioned above will prove this more than the objects which the authors have in mind. At the same time there is no doubt that the winds are blowing more from the quarter of Barth than they are from that of Harnack, and if progress be always by a process of 'tacking,' of moving first in one direction and then in another, which seems almost clean contrary, it may at last appear that the general direction was not so far from straight after all.

M. KNIGHT.

PSYCHIC EXPERIENCES.*

The value of books on this subject depends to a great extent on the qualifications of the author, on his capacity to estimate evidence and freedom from prejudice. *We are Here* claims special attention because there can be no doubt as to the qualification of the writer in this respect. The experiences recorded must be accepted as facts, what ever interpretation the reader may put upon them; if the Judge had a bias, it was on the side of incredulity. He was an agnostic; the survival of bodily death seemed to him improbable, but being a man with high ideals, his family, of three sons and one daughter were brought up in an atmosphere in which strong family affection blended with these ideals. The influence of noble literature formed a part of their education; but, he says, 'I doubt if one could find the Bible . . . on any of our shelves, or in fact any book with specially religious contents' (p. 21).

The eldest son was drowned in a boating accident and after that the Judge's daughter discovered that she possessed psychic faculties. Her trances were of a rather unusual type, having two stages, one of profound sleep, and the other in which she appeared to be 'awake' but not in the normal sense—the Judge at first observed but took no part; after a while, however, he became convinced not only that super-normal phenomena occurred but that the son who had died was in real communication with his sister.

The effect of these experiences, and the contents of the communications made, entirely altered his outlook on life. 'It is my candid opinion,' he writes, 'that they have virtually solved the problem of life quite satisfactorily. To me, at least, the meaning of life on earth seems no longer an unsolved riddle' (p. 246). In the Epilogue he makes a definite statement of his pesent convictions; these cannot be summarised in a short review, it must suffice to say that belief in God and in Christ as a Divine Messenger are now for him profound realities involving unfailing hope, great joy and above all the obligations of Service, that is to say co-operation with God in working out those purposes for mankind of which he is now assured.

It is obvious that experiences which could have such results on a highly educated mind, trained to sift and weigh evidence, deserve to be carefully considered by serious thinkers at a time like the present, when the daily paper bears constant witness to the fact that doubt as to the value and persistence of personality is repeatedly leading men to take their own lives when the burden of existence and its unsolved problems becomes heavy.

Readers would do well to read the first part, about 80—90 pages, and then turn to chapter v, p. 201, and read to the end: the intervening pages record conversations which, although of interest to a student, are rather tedious for those who are unacquainted with the various persons who claim to communicate. These conversations might, with advantage, have been

**We are Here.* Psychic Experiences by Judge Ludwig Dahl, with an Introduction by Sir Oliver Lodge. Translated from the Norwegian. (Rider & Co. 7/6.)

placed in an appendix rather than in the middle of the book. Readers of the earlier and later pages will certainly want to turn back to the conversations.

H. A. DALLAS.

ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATIONS.*

The allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament is familiar to most of us, and may seem to many of us a legitimate method of explaining certain narratives which can hardly be explained as pure history, such for example as that of the Song of Songs, if we refuse to admit that this is a collection of love-songs. When we are told that the Gospel story which most of us have been taught to regard as historical is to be interpreted throughout as spiritual or allegorical, we must feel that the allegorical interpretation is being carried too far. It may be true that the Christ idea is impersonal. Why go on to explain away the historical Jesus? In his latest book*, Mr. G. A. Gaskell makes the following remarkable statement: 'It is interesting to note that the trend of all modern Biblical scholarship is to *destroy the historicity* of considerable portions of the Bible, which destruction is suggestive that the logical end of this critical process will be the doing away entirely with the notion that the Bible contains genuine history. The "higher criticism" will complete its useful work in fully discrediting the historicity of Jesus.' The higher critics will be surprised to hear this. What about the excavators and archaeologists? They as a matter of fact are claiming that their discoveries confirm the historicity of considerable portions of the Bible! And whether they be higher critics or archaeologists, New Testament scholars show little tendency, if any, to deny the historicity of Jesus.

Mr. Gaskell calls special attention to the Syriac work, *The Book of Hierotheos,* which is said to have been written originally in Greek. With reference to the book he writes: 'This Hellenic Christian scripture seems to have been the last effort in the work of the Holy Spirit to correct the error into which the Christian Churches had fallen, of regarding the Gospel story as history, and the divine Jesus a physical man of Judaea, thus materialising the religion of Christ, by confusing it with history. That Divine effort to enlighten the Churches of the fourth century was a failure, and the terrible results of a false belief in a material Jesus whose barbarous treatment and death by crucifixion should be avenged, are to be seen in the ecclesiastical persecutions of Gnostics, Jews, and heretics, and in the misery of fanatical "holy wars," and also in the cruelties perpetrated until recently by ecclesiastical intolerance and tyranny.' Here we cannot help asking: If the crucifixion of Jesus was not real, why suppose that the persecutions and holy wars were any more so?

In the same spiritual and allegorical way Mr. Gaskell expounds for us, not only the Book of Hierotheos, but also the first book of Homer's Iliad, verses from Empedocles and Anaxagoras, and the story of the Argonauts. Those who have been initiated into the mysteries of his allegorical interpretation and have read with approval his other works, will no doubt welcome his new book. Those who have not been initiated will find the interpretation more difficult than the text, and will wonder why Mr. Gaskell does not expound his highly spiritual philosophy in a way more intelligible to people of ordinary intelligence and without tacking it on to texts which may be interpreted in a quite different manner.

M.A.C.

March 30th, 1932.

**Hellenic Scriptures Interpreted.* By G. A. Gaskell. (The C. W. Daniel Company: 1930. 7/6 net.)

CORRESPONDENCE

A BOOK-LIST FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS.

I. (*a*) Ages 4—8.

Baby's Own Book	Mrs. G. Chitty	1/-	R.T.S.
Wonderful Stories of Jesus	,,	1/-	R.T.S.
The Story of Jesus	Mary Francis.		
Prayers for Little Children		1/-	Challenge.
A Child's Prayers	C. S. Woodward	3*d*.	Challenge.
The Children's Kingdom	G. Watts	2/6	Blackwell.
A Baby's Life of Christ	M. Rolt	2/6	
Stories told to the Scamps	C. S. Woodward	2/6	S.C.M.
Jesus of Nazareth	Hole's Pictures	15/-	Eyre and Spottiswood.

(*b*) Ages 8—12.

In Him was Life	Elnith Bevan	1/6	S.P.C.K.
Stories from the Bible	Walter de la Mare	3/6	
Paul the Dauntless	Basil Matthews	6/-	Partridge.
Stories from the O.T. Prophets	Gilke	3/6	Black.
Child's Life of Christ	Mabel Dearmer	4/6	Methuen.
Boys' and Girls' Life of Christ	Paterson Smyth.		
House of Prayer	Converse	5/-	Dent.
Jesus Among the Children	C. S. Woodward	5/-	Hodder and Stoughton.

(*c*) Books for Parents.

The Child's Approach to Religion	W. F. Fox.		
The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of a Child	Mrs. E. Read Mumford	3/6	Longmans.
How we can help Children to Pray	,,	3/6	Longmans.
Can I teach my child Religion?	Stewart	3/-	S.C.M.
Child life and Religion	Forest	4/6	Williams and Norgate.

II. Adolescence and Confirmation Candidates.

The Making and Meaning of the Bible	G. Barclay	2/6	S.C.M.
The Meaning of the Old Testament	Hugh Martin	2/6	S.C.M.
A Modern Confimation Manual	H. K. Luce		Black, 1927.
Lessons on the Way	P. Dearmer	3/6	S.P.C.K. and Heffer.
The Adult School Lesson Handbook			Published annually; National Adult School Union.
A Life of Jesus	B. Matthews.		
A Life unto God	Bp. of Liverpool.		S.P.C.K.
People's Life of Christ	Paterson Smyth.		
How we got our Bible	Paterson Smyth.		
The Quiet Adventure	Willis	2/-	S.C.M.
Christian Outlines	Cyril Alington		Nicholson and Watson.

III. Introductory Books for Adults.

An Introduction to Old Testament Study for Teachers and Students - -	E. B. Redlich -		Macmillan.
Jesus by an Eye-Witness -	H. D. A. Major -		Murray, 1925.
The Modern Use of the Bible	H. E. Fosdick.		
A Study of the Old Testament	J. W. Povah -	2/6	S.C.M.
A Study of the New Testament	D. B. Walker -	2/6	S.C.M.

IV. The Modern Approach to Religion.

Modern Problems of the Church - - - -	H. D. A. Major -	1/-	Cassell.
English Modernism - -	,, -	3/6	Blackwell.
Modernism and What it Did for me - - - -	The Enquiring Layman - -		Newnes.
Modernism as a Working Faith - - - -	W. M. Pryke -		Heffers.
Should such a Faith Offend?	E. W. Barnes -	7/6	Hodder and Stoughton.
The Faith of the Apostles' Creed - - - -	J. F. Bethune-Baker		Macmillan.
The Gospel and the Modern Mind - - - -	W. R. Matthews -		Macmillan.
The Way of Modernism -	J. F. Bethune-Baker		Cambs. Univ. Press.
The Christian Outlook in the Modern World - -	Archbp. D'Arcy -		Hodder and Stoughton.

V. Books for Students showing Present Position.

The History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge - - - - - - - -			Blackie & Son, 1929.

SOME WORDS OF C. R. SHAW STEWART.

Sir,

The following passages have been chosen by a friend from three printed addresses of the late Rev. C. R. Shaw Stewart. They were published about twenty-five years ago, together with some addresses of a colleague, in a book named *Christian Faith and Hope*. The headings have been added by the selector.

The Whole Creed.

'I believe in one God.' This is the whole Creed of Man in its simplest form. All that follows is not an addition to this (there is nothing to add) but an expansion of it.

The Reconciler.

'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.' These old words have unexplored virtue in them still.

The Holy Spirit.

I know of no quickening vision other than that of the Spirit of Wholeness pledged to heal all wounds and fulfil in us all the Father's will.

The Nicene Creed.

It is a considered exposition of the content of the religious consciousness of the age. It is historically interesting as being the only real dogma of the whole Church. Even so it can have no validity beyond what we care or choose to give to it. Like all documents that survive, its value is not in the letter that kills, but in the Spirit that gives life.

Dead Dogma.

I know of no real death other than stagnation.

The Decline of Ecclesiasticism.

Ecclesiasticism is breaking down. Landmarks, tests, definitions, are in many instances growing old and ready to vanish away. And this not because they have not done, and may not still be doing, a useful divinely appointed work, but because they are no longer good enough, no longer true enough. The world has grown beyond their measure; the potencies wrapt up in human life are being found to be largely beyond their ken.

The Authority Within.

We must come to live not by the guidance of an outward authority, but by the Life-Power in our very Being.

Church Reform.

The principle of reform lies in the old maxim that the Church was made for man, not man for the Church; its method consists in vitalising the term Church, that it may lose its abstract meaning as of something [theologically] static . . . and become livingly related to living ideas and aspirations.

Prophets.

Prophets are the human mouthpieces of vital truths. Vital truths will always find utterance for themselves in the lips of those most sensitive to them. Prophets suffer persecution at the hands of their fellows because the burden of their message, which is always 'Come up higher,' cuts directly across the impulse of the unregenerate heart.

Christianity Boundless.

Chritianity is not in *essence* one more formulated, closely reasoned out logical system of thought, of cult, of activity, to be compared with many rivals for better or for worse. It is the Light of all lights, the Energy of all activities: . . . it is the activity of the all-present, all-operative Life of the Universe.

Calvary Central.

Calvary is rightly made a central conception. It represents the meeting point between heaven and earth, God and the world.

Truth.

Truth is not *made*, it is *found*.

God and Science.

He inspires and urges us to search into everything, to hunt and enquire everywhere, to touch and taste and handle everything that comes our way: the more we come to know the more at home we shall feel, deeper depths

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL OF THE PACIFIC

can but bring us into closer and fuller relationship with the Source. There is naught to fear but cowardice, nothing hidden or unrevealed but that it may come to light. This is our temper to-day, our religious thought.

BIGOTRY.

[When] we do not recognise the narrowness of our postulates, nor feel shame that our views are restricted outlooks from valleys rather than panoramas of the hills.

HISTORY ALIVE.

I believe that when we deal in any living way with the history of thought we are not really dealing with what no longer exists, but are, in fact, trying to give shape to real vital processes that are at work to-day within us. Each of us is a microcosm of the macrocosm. What lies extended in history is the record and sign of living things within us. In our own minds to-day are alive all the thoughts, the processes of which are recorded in what we call the past, in books, in institutions, in buildings and so forth. What we do leave behind are ideas, habits of thought, forms of speech, that are no longer adequate to represent our present knowledge and experience.

HISTORY DOES NOT REPEAT ITSELF.

The dictum that 'History repeats itself' cannot be an adequate statement. Nothing in the past can be an exact precedent for the present. Quite similar combinations of circumstances never recur. The spirit of the moment, of the age, must be the judge of the action for the moment, for the age. 'It is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.'

THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED.

We are all children of promise. This is the 'Faith once for all delivered to the Saints' that we are told to contend for.

THE CHURCHES AND THE CREEDS.

The Churches, whilst wisely holding their trusteeship of the Christian Creeds as a high privilege, fail often enough to rise to the import of what is contained in them.

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.

The religion of Jesus, if it be true . . . involves a complete revolution in man's account of himself.

A TEST.

Jesus [left] behind Him . . . no rule but one: . . . 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one towards another.'

THE KEY OF TEACHING.

Just as through inspiration we learn, even so through inspiration can we teach, if ourselves inspired.

TO-DAY.

Has ever time been riper than this for the awakening of men into the recognition of the meaning and reality of the out-pouring Spirit of the common Fatherhood? To make them see that at the heart of things all is well?

IN RESPECT AND GRATITUDE,

X.

DATE OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

SIR,

While the Synoptic Gospels date the Crucifixion a day later than St. John does, there is reason to believe that one of the traditions lying behind them agreed with St. John on this matter. I have long been of opinion that St. Mark xiv, 1—xvi, 8, is based on two earlier documents; in my attempt to reconstruct these sources I came to the conclusion that xiv, 1, 2, 10, 11, 17-21, 26-32, formed a continuous narrative derived from a source other than that from which xiv, 3-9, 12-16, 22-25, were taken. It was only when I had reached this conclusion for quite other reasons that I noticed that the document agreed in three points with St. John and in one with St. Luke against the Marcan narrative. (1) It appears to date the Crucifixion on the same day as St. John does. (2) It gives an account of the last supper which contains no reference to the institution of the Eucharist, again agreeing with St. John. (3) It places the prophecy of St. Peter's denial in the room when the last supper was eaten, not on the road to Gethsemane: on this point it agrees with St. Luke and St. John.

ERIC REDE BUCKLEY.

Polstead Rectory, Colchester.

'PROTESTANTISM IN SPAIN.'

SIR,

I hope you will make the following correction in my article published in your March issue. I am made to say there that the Prime Minister, who is a loyal Roman Catholic, some years ago translated into Spanish George Borrow's *Bible in Spain*. What I intended to say was that the President is a loyal Roman Catholic, and the Prime Minister some years ago, etc., and from this I deduced the conclusion that the Prime Minister was not hostile to religion, although I am sure he could not be called a loyal son of the Church.

C. W. D. GRIMES.

Villa Sans Souci, Barcelona.

'THE GROUPS' AND *DEUTERONOMY*.

SIR,

In the January number, in an article on 'The Groups' (p. 543), the '*Deuteronomic* criterion for knowing the true from the false prophet' is stated to be 'according as his prediction turned out true or false.' I had always thought the crucial passage was *Deuteronomy* XIII, 1—5, in which it is very clearly stated that if a prophet 'give a sign or wonder, *and the sign or the wonder come to pass*, whereof he spoke unto thee, saying "Let us go after other gods," thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet . . . and that prophet shall be put to death; because he hath spoken rebellion against the Lord your God . . . *to draw thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in.*'

Here, surely, the test is not in the sign but in the content of the message, just where Our Lord puts it in His question about the 'Baptism of John,' who did no 'sign.' With reference to such a noble book as *Deuteronomy*, it hardly seems fair to narrow 'the way which thy Lord God commanded thee to walk in' to the worship of other gods.

I first came in contact with 'The Groups' in Peking last July, and heard of them in Liverpool on landing, and am thankful for their vital elements

of personal conviction and responsibility and corporate fellowship and joy which somehow tend to lie latent in much institutional religion. As the writer of the article says, the movement *is* a challenge to the churches. May they all take it up!

A CHINA MISSIONARY.

PUBLIC DIVINITY LECTURES.

SIR,

It may interest readers of the *Modern Churchman* to know how the work of the University Extra-Mural Boards in promoting the study of the Bible and kindred subjects among the general public has increased during the last two years.

Since the Divinity Lectures Committee started work six years ago the number of classes has increased from 2 to well over 100. Last session there were 73 classes in different parts of England, Scotland and Wales; this session there have been 110. Of these 44 were Public Evening Lectures given by well-known scholars in the various Universities, 37 were University Extension Courses, 11 Three Year Tutorial Classes. The rest were Preparatory Tutorial, One Year and Terminal Classes.

In London the University Evening School of Bible Study maintained by the Divinity Lectures Committee for the last eight years at University College, Gower Street, has still been well attended and a considerable number of students have entered for the London University Diploma for evening class students in the Literary, Historical and Comparative Study of the Bible, two obtaining the Gilchrist Medal.

Further information about the work can be obtained from Miss E. Bray, 4 Garnham Street, N. 16, who will be glad to send advice and information to all who would like to start a University Extension or Tutorial Class on the Bible or kindred subjects in their neighbourhood.

MARJORY S. WEST,
Hon. Org. Secretary.

Penbryn, Fox Hill, Norwood, S.E.19.

A WEEK-END MODERNIST CONFERENCE.

SIR,

I shall be grateful if you will allow me to call the attention of your readers to a short week-end conference which is being held at Elfinsward, Hayward's Heath, Sussex (The Chichester Diocesan House), May 21st—23rd.

The subject for discussion will be 'God.' Sir Francis Younghusband will be the Chairman and will read a paper on 'The Idea of God and Modern Science.' Other papers will be :—

The Rev. G. F. Allen : 'Transcendence of God' (Karl Barth).
Miss M. D. R. Willink : 'The Holiness of God' (Otto).
Miss M. S. West : 'Providence and Miracles.'

The charge for the week-end (Saturday tea to Monday breakfast) will be 17/6.

Those who wish to come are asked to send their names to me with 2/6 deposit.

T. J. WOOD.

St. John's Vicarage, 384 Clapham Road, London, S.W.9.
April 5th, 1932.